

The World's Classics

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THE LIFE OF TOLSTÓY

VOL. I. FIRST FIFTY YEARS

By AYLMER MAUDE



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*A man so various that he seemed to be
Not one, but all mankind's epitome.*

DRYDEN



VOL. I

OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS
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LEO TÓLSTOY

Born, Yásnaya Polyána, Túla

August 28 (old style) = September 9, n.s., 1828

Died, Astapóvo, Riazán

November 9 (old style) = November 22, n.s., 1910

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VOL I

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AUTHOR'S PREFACE

I WROTE this book because so many people are interested in Tolstóy and so few seem to understand him. An English Life of him seems therefore to be needed, and having lived in Russia for twenty-three years, known Tolstóy well for several years, visited him often in Moscow and stayed with him repeatedly at Yásnaya Polyána, I am perhaps qualified to write it, especially as I have made a long and careful study of his views. My wife and I have translated most of his works, have known people closely connected with him, and have taken part in an unsuccessful 'Tolstóy' Colony; I also went to Canada at his wish to arrange the Dukhobór migration of which I subsequently wrote the history.

Moreover I am impartial. That is to say, I have taken pains to understand Tolstóy's views and to recognize the good in them, but being a Westerner, I am also aware of certain things Tolstóy overlooked which seem to knock big holes in some of his cherished 'principles'.

To my first *Life of Tolstóy*, which appeared in 1908 and 1910, Tolstóy himself contributed a good deal of matter, and it had the advantage of being carefully revised by his wife, Countess S. A. Tolstóy, who rendered me assistance both verbally and in writing: I have now cordially to thank his eldest daughter, Countess Tatiána Tolstóy (Madame Sukhotín), for very kindly reading and correcting the present amended work.

I owe thanks also to my friend P. I. Birukóv, Tolstóy's Russian biographer, and to N. N. Gúsev, of whose very reliable and careful works, *Tolstóy in Youth* and *Tolstóy in the Flower of his Artistic Genius*, I have made free use. Tolstóy has been fortunate in both his Russian biographers, who have dealt with the facts of his life

clearly and conscientiously. If they and I do not see eye to eye on some of his later opinions, the difference probably arises chiefly from the fact that I am English while they are Russian.

There is a matter of typography which needs some explanation. I have sought to tell as much of the story as possible in Tolstóy's own words, and have had occasion to quote other writers. At times the Russian text quoted contains allusions or expressions which might perplex an English reader unless a word or two of explanation were added. To introduce paragraphs of explanation would interrupt the narrative, besides lengthening the book. To have recourse to frequent footnotes, in cases where two or three words of explanation are all that is required, is unsightly and unsatisfactory; so I have adopted the plan of using square brackets [] to enclose such explanations or where, for clearness' sake, words are added that are not contained in the original. The ordinary round parentheses () I have kept for their common use.

Beyond indicating the varying value of sums of money mentioned, I have not troubled the reader with the fluctuations of the ruble, which during the period dealt with went from over 38 pence before the Crimean war to 19 pence after the Russo-Turkish war of 1878.

In its first form this book was published while Tolstóy was still alive. Some brief account of his home-leaving and death was introduced in subsequent editions, but they were not dealt with in due proportion to the rest of the narrative, or in a way to show the tragic influence his 'principles' had on the final event.

Much has been published about him since he died and additional matter is incorporated in these volumes; but I have not found many errors to correct. The difficulty of making room for the new matter and for a fuller

account of his last days within the limits of these two volumes, has chiefly been met by omitting passages quoted from translations now available, to which I have referred the reader where necessary.

The years that have passed since the work first appeared have confirmed my belief in the importance of understanding Tolstóy's outlook on religion, social problems, art, and life generally. He was not always right, but he was always thoughtful, and stated important matters plainly and impressively. No writer of comparable power has handled so wide a range of great questions so profoundly, sincerely, and persuasively. To follow his thought, broadens and deepens our comprehension of life, and if at times we are forced to join issue with him and to find reasons for this disagreement, the effort is valuable and invigorating.

To be able to say this much of one who stands in the forefront of the world's novelists, dramatists, and short story writers, is to claim for him an amazing range both as artist and as thinker, but the claim is fully justified.

While still a young officer fighting in Sevastopol, he was keenly conscious of man's need of guidance in life and of the impossibility of any one man supplying all that is needed.

'A conversation about Divinity and Faith', he wrote in his Diary, 'has suggested to me a great, a stupendous idea, to the realization of which I feel myself capable of devoting my life. This idea is the founding of a new religion corresponding to the present state of mankind . . . a practical religion . . . giving bliss on earth. I understand that to accomplish this the conscious labour of generations will be needed. One generation will bequeath the idea to the next, and some day fanaticism or reason will accomplish it. Deliberately to promote the

union of mankind by religion—that is the basic thought which, I hope, will dominate me.’

Those words were written before he was twenty-seven. His subsequently expressed outlook on life and indictment of war were in keeping with that early aspiration, and did more than was done by any other man of his time to prepare men’s minds for the League of Nations and such proposals as Mr. Kellogg put forward to cause wars to cease.

Tolstóy’s ardour and truthfulness were such that his life and works continually acted and re-acted on one another. We cannot fully appreciate or understand his works without knowing his life, and the story of his life must be told with constant reference to his books.

His desire was that truth should prevail over error, and the ultimate achievement of that aim depends on the number and quality of those who with like sincerity and independence of mind co-operate in the pursuit of that purpose, neither credulously accepting nor lightly rejecting the guidance he offered, but thinking with their own heads and accepting or rejecting as their reason demands.

AYLMER MAUDE.

GREAT BADDOW,
CHELMSFORD,
12 *July* 1930.

NOTE ON THE PRONUNCIATION OF RUSSIAN NAMES

The spelling of Russian names in Latin letters in a work of this kind presents difficulties.

On the one hand a man has a right to decide how he will have his name spelt, but on the other hand the employment of different systems of transliteration in one book tends to confusion.

I have, in general, followed the transliteration scheme of the British Academy. In pronouncing the names the reader should note the following:

I. Stress the syllable marked with an accent.

II. Vowel sounds are broad and open:

a as in *father*.

e as *a* in *fate*, but *e* initial and unaccented is pronounced *ye*.

ě as *yo* in *yolk*.

i as *ee* in *meet*.

o as in *loch*.

u as *oo* in *boot*.

In diphthongs the broad sounds are retained:

ya as in *yard*.

ye as in *yes*.

yo as in *yore*.

yu as *u* in *usury*.

ay as *eye*.

ey as in *they*.

oy as in *boy*.

III. *y* with a vowel forms a diphthong. It also stands for the difficult Russian letter *ы* which sounds something like *we* thickly pronounced.

IV. Consonants:

g is hard, as in *go*.

zh is like *z* in *azure*.

r is sounded strongly, as in *rough*, *barren*.

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CHAPTER I

ANCESTRY AND PARENTAGE

COUNT LEO TOLSTÓY was born on 28th August (old style)¹ 1828, on the estate of Yásnaya Polyána (Clear Glade) in the province of Túla, about 130 miles south of Moscow.

In the annals of the Russian nobility it is recorded that a man named Indris came from 'the lands of Caesar', that is to say, from the Holy Roman Empire, in the year 1353 with two sons and 3,000 followers, and settling at Chernígov in the Ukraine was received with favour by the reigning Grand Duke, who granted him much land. A great-grandson of his, Andrew by name, migrated to Moscow, where he was well received by the reigning Grand Duke Vasíli (1435-62), who conferred upon him the surname of Tolstóy.

As, however, the annals of the Russian nobility were to a large extent concocted about the time of Peter the Great, it is doubtful whether this story is true. Be that as it may, it is certain that Peter Tolstóy, born in 1645, distinguished himself in the service of the State. During the struggles which preceded the acquisition of power by Peter the Great he made the mistake of allying himself with that autocrat's ambitious half-sister, Sophia. The defeat of her Guards, the Streltsí, caused him quickly to transfer his allegiance to Peter, whose favour he eventually managed to secure. When drinking with his

¹ Till the Revolution Russia retained the old style calendar, abandoned in England since 1752. There was, therefore, a twelve days' difference during the nineteenth century, and the Russian 1st January was our 13th January. In the twentieth century the difference increased to thirteen days. In this book the dates are given old style, except in the chapter telling of his travels in western Europe, where (as there mentioned) the new style is adopted.

chosen companions in later days, the Tsar would often pat Tolstóy's head, saying, 'Head, head, it would have been time for you to come off your shoulders long ago, had you not been so clever.'

This Peter Tolstóy held a commission in the Guards and fought in the Azov campaign of 1696, but later on was sent abroad by Peter to study shipbuilding. In 1701 he was sent as Ambassador to the Sublime Porte, and when war broke out between Turkey and Russia in 1710, he twice suffered imprisonment, for nearly two years in all, in the Seven Towers—the stronghold where in the Sultan occasionally confined the ambassadors of States with whose conduct he felt dissatisfied. Returning to Russia in 1714, Tolstóy obtained the favour of Prince Ménshikov and became a Minister of State. He accompanied Peter the Great to Holland and France, and did him an important though discreditable service. Peter the Great's son, the refractory Aléxis, who disliked his father's reforms, had escaped from Russia and 1717 was living with his mistress Euphrosyne at St. Elmo, near Naples. By threats and promises, and by the aid of this woman, Tolstóy induced the unfortunate Tsaré-
vich to return to Russia, and when he had got him there took a leading part in his trial and secret execution.

For this service Tolstóy received large estates and was promoted to the headship of the Secret Chancellery.

On the day of the coronation of Peter's second wife, Catherine, Tolstóy became a Count. His coat of 30th arms shows seven towers, in memory of his im-
Aug. prisonment by the Sultan, and is appropriately
1725 supported by two wolf-hounds rampant, looking outwards.

On the death of Peter the Great, Tolstóy actively supported Ménshikov in securing the throne for Catherine I and was one of the seven members of the Upper Secret Council which practically ruled Russia. On the question of choosing a successor to Catherine he ventured, however, to oppose Ménshikov. The latter was too powerful for him, and, forfeiting his title of Count and deprived

of all offices, rewards and estates, Tolstóy, at the age of eighty-two, was banished to the Solovéts Monastery on an island in the White Sea. Here, two years later, he died. Ménshikov himself, one may remark in passing, finished his life that same year in Siberia, having been banished by an order signed by the boy he had placed on the throne. To be a Russian Minister of State in those days was almost as dangerous as it would be to-day, in Russia, to oppose the Dictatorship of the Proletariate.

The title of Count was revived in the family in 1760 for the benefit of Peter Tolstóy's grandson, Andrew, who while still a youth married a Princess, Shchetínin, who bore him twenty-three children. One of these was Count Ilyá Tolstóy who figures in *War and Peace* as the elder Count Rostóv. He married a Princess Gorchakóv and was Leo Tolstóy's grandfather.

There is one matter it may be as well to explain at the outset, as English readers are often puzzled by it: I refer to Russian titles of nobility, which have been abolished since the Revolution, but often occur in this book and in Tolstóy's works. The only really Russian title is that of *Knyaz*, commonly translated 'Prince'. It was borne by descendants of Rúrik, by descendants of the Lithuanian Prince Ghedimín, and by descendants of various Tartar Khans whose dominions Russia annexed. It was also conferred by Imperial Decree on a dozen or more other Russian families. Though *Knyaz* is translated 'Prince', *Veliki Knyaz*, curiously enough, is not translated 'Great Prince', but 'Grand Duke', and this indicates how difficult it is to find suitable equivalents for these titles. Not till the time of Peter the Great were the German titles, Count (*Graf*) and Baron, introduced into Russia. Both of these became common among the Russo-German landlords of the Baltic Provinces, but less so among real Russians.

It must be borne in mind that there was no law of primogeniture in Russia. Each son and daughter inherited the family title, so that there were usually

several, and sometimes many, people with equal rights to the same title. Though springing from one stock they might be but distantly connected. There were, for instance, other Counts Tolstóy, contemporaries of Leo Tolstóy and distant cousins of his. One of these, his third cousin the poet Count Aléxis Tolstóy, was a well-known author and dramatist. Many other members of the family were also writers or artists.

Tolstóy's grandfather already mentioned, Count Ilyá Tolstóy, was an easy-going, generous, trustful, and extravagant man, who married a wealthy Princess Gorchakóv, but ran through her money and his own, and at last, to secure a means of livelihood, procured the post of Governor of Kazán. This he was able to do thanks to his family influence. It is recorded to his credit that, contrary to the general custom of the time, he accepted no bribes (except from the Government contractor, who was considered the natural financial prop of a Provincial Governor), though his wife accepted presents without his knowledge. His son, Count Nicholas Tolstóy, was Leo Tolstóy's father. Ilyá Tolstóy's career as Governor came to an unhappy conclusion. The representatives of the nobility of the province were hostile to him and denounced him to Alexander I's all-powerful Minister Arakhchéev. A committee of investigation was appointed which was controlled by personal enemies of his, and as a result of their report, on 5th February 1820, an Imperial decree was issued dismissing Count Ilyá Tolstóy from his post. He was so distressed by this that he fell ill and died within a month. No serious misconduct was in fact proved against him, beyond the fact that he had borrowed 5,000 rubles of Treasury money which it was illegal to do. There were probably few provincial Governors of the time against whom more serious offences could not have been proved.

The Tolstóys were a prolific family. Klyuchévski the historian, told Tolstóy's wife that of all the families ennobled under Peter the Great and Catherine the Great they were the only family that had survived.

Count Ilyá Tolstóy's eldest daughter married a Count Osten-Saken. She became guardian to Leo Tolstóy and his brothers and sister after the loss of their parents. Another daughter married V. I. Yúshkov, and Leo Tolstóy was under her charge when he lived in Kazán and studied at that University.

The first fact known to us about Leo Tolstóy's father is characteristic of the manners of his class and day. When he was only sixteen his parents arranged a *liaison* between him and a peasant girl, such connexions being considered necessary for the health of young men. A son was born, and Tolstóy records his 'strange feeling of consternation when (in after years) this brother of mine, fallen into destitution and bearing a greater resemblance to my father than any of us, used to beg help of us and was thankful for the ten or fifteen rubles we used to give him'.

Nicholas Tolstóy was not yet eighteen when Napoleon invaded Russia; but despite his parents' efforts to dissuade him, he insisted on entering the army. He went through the campaigns of 1813 in Germany, and on his way to rejoin the army after being sent with dispatches to his mother's cousin, Prince Alexéy Gorchakóv, Minister of War, in Petersburg, he and his orderly were captured by the French. The orderly managed to hide his master's gold coins in his boots, and for months never risked taking them off, though his feet grew sore and he suffered extreme discomfort. Thanks to this devotion, Nicholas Tolstóy, after reaching Paris, was able to live in comfort.

After the war was over Nicholas was appointed Adjutant to Prince Andrew Gorchakóv, a General in command, and a brother of the Minister of War. The family connexion with the Gorchakóvs was, later on, of use to Leo Tolstóy at the time of the Crimean War.

Nicholas retired in 1819 with the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel, and entered the Civil Service, in which he served till January 1824.

Count Ilyá, on his death in 1820, left his estate so

encumbered that his son declined to accept the inheritance. The young man had to face the task of
 1820 providing for his old mother who was accustomed to great luxury, as well as for a sister and a distant cousin, Tatiána Alexándrovna Érgolski, who had been adopted into the family; and so his relations arranged a marriage for him with the wealthy but plain Princess Márya Volkónski.

His father's life, Tolstóy tells us, was then passed in attending to the estate, a business in which he was not very expert but in which he exercised a virtue great for those days: he avoided cruelty, and even perhaps lacked firmness. During his lifetime I never heard of corporal punishment. If it ever was administered to the serfs the cases were so rare and my father took so little part in them that we children never heard them mentioned. It was after his death that I learnt for the first time that such punishment ever took place at home.

Like most men who served in the army in the early years of Alexander's reign, he [Count Nicholas Tolstóy] was not what is now called a Liberal, but out of self-respect he considered it impossible to serve during the latter [reactionary] part of Alexander's reign, or under Nicholas I]. During all my childhood and youth our family had no intimate relations with any Government official. I of course understood nothing about this in childhood, but I understood that my father never humbled himself before any one, nor altered his brisk, merry, and often chaffing tone. This feeling of self-respect which I witnessed in him increased my love and admiration for him.

Leo Tolstóy's mother's family, the Volkónskis, were descendants from Rúrik (the first ruler mentioned in Russian history) as well as from St. Michael the martyr, Prince of Chernígov; and through them, even more than on his father's side, Tolstóy was connected with many of the leading families of the Russian aristocracy. Prince Nicholas Volkónski, his mother's father, came into conflict with the most powerful of the favourites of Catherine the Great. Tolstóy tells us that 'having attained the high position of *Général en Chef*, he lost it suddenly by refusing to marry Potëmkin's niece and

mistress, Varvára Engelhardt. To Potëmkin's suggestion that he should do so, he replied: "What makes him think I will marry his strumpet?"

There is, however, some mistake here, for Volkónski did not attain the rank of *Général en Chef* under Catherine the Great, but later under Paul, when Potëmkin was no longer in power. He served as an officer in the Turkish campaign of 1780, and as Ambassador-Extraordinary at Berlin in 1793, and he was actually dismissed from the army in 1797 by Paul for failing to attend a review. He was re-admitted eighteen months later and appointed Military Governor of Archangel. There he served for less than a year, and, after reaching the rank of *Général en Chef* in June 1799, retired into private life in November and settled on his estate of Yásnaya Polyána, where he died in 1821.

He had married a Princess Catherine Trubetskóy. She died in 1799, leaving her husband an only daughter nine years of age, who was Tolstóy's mother. This Princess Trubetskóy, who was Tolstóy's grandmother, was also the great-granddaughter of a certain Márya Glébova, the poet Púshkin's great-great-grandmother, so that Tolstóy was Púshkin's third cousin once removed.

Tolstóy writes of his grandfather, Prince N. Volkónski:

He was regarded as a very exacting master, but I never heard any instance of his being cruel or inflicting the severe punishments usual in those days. I believe such things did happen on his estate, but the enthusiastic respect for his importance and cleverness was so great among the servants and peasants whom I have often questioned about him, that though I have heard my father condemned, I have heard only praise of my grandfather's intelligence, business capacity, and interest in the welfare both of the peasants and of his enormous household.

Later, a strange chance brought Prince Volkónski again into touch with Varvára Engelhardt whom he had refused to marry. She married a Prince Sergéy Golítsin, who consequently received promotions and decorations and rewards; and Tolstóy tells us: 'With this Sergéy

Golítsin and his family my grandfather formed so close a friendship that my mother from her childhood was betrothed to one of his ten sons. . . . This alliance, however, was not destined to be consummated, for the young man died prematurely of fever.'

In a portrait of Prince N. Volkónski, which has been preserved, there is much that corresponds to Leo Tolstóy's own appearance. 'Both', as his brother-in-law remarks, 'have high, open foreheads and large organs of the creative faculty, and in both the organs of musical talent are exceedingly prominent and are covered by thick overhanging eyebrows, from beneath which small, deep-set grey eyes pierce the soul of the man on whom they are turned.'

It was after his death that his daughter Márya married Count Nicholas Tolstóy, who was then twenty-
 1822 eight, she being thirty-two. Her dowry included 800 serfs, as well as the estate of Yásnaya Polyána. In *War and Peace* Tolstóy has described her—as he pictured her to himself from what he heard from relations and servants and could learn from her letters and diary—as Princess Márya. He tells us in his *Reminiscences*:

I do not remember my mother. I was a year-and-a-half old when she died. [He was actually nearly two.] By some strange chance no portrait of her has been preserved, so that as a real physical being I cannot picture her to myself. I am in a way glad of this for in my conception of her there is only her spiritual figure and all that I know about her is beautiful. I think this has come about not merely because all who spoke to me of my mother tried to say only what was good, but because there actually was much good in her.

She was well educated, spoke five languages, played the piano well, and had a wonderful gift for improvising tales in the most delightful manner. It is said that at balls her young lady friends would leave the dance and gather in a dark room to hear her tell a story, which shyness induced her to do where she could not be seen. Tolstóy remarks that 'her most valuable quality was that though hot-tempered she was yet self-restrained.

"She would get quite red in the face and even cry," her maid told me, "but would never say a rude word." ' She had in particular one quality Tolstóy valued very highly—that of never condemning any one. It was a characteristic shared by her eldest son, Nicholas; and Leo Tolstóy says: 'In the *Lives of the Saints* by D. Rostóvski, there is a short story which has always touched me exceedingly, of a certain monk who to the knowledge of all his brethren had many faults, but whom an old monk, in a dream, saw occupying a place of honour among the saints. The old man asked in astonishment, "How could this monk, so unrestrained in many ways, deserve so great a reward?" The answer was: "He never condemned any one." ' "

Tolstóy adds: 'If such rewards did exist, I think my brother and my mother would have received them.'

Another feature Tolstóy records of his mother is 'her truthfulness and the simple tone of her correspondence'. He tells us that in his imagination his mother 'appeared to me a creature so elevated, pure, and spiritual, that often in the middle period of my life, during my struggles with overwhelming temptations, I prayed to her soul, begging her to aid me; and such prayer always helped me much'.

Yet another quality Tolstóy says showed itself in his mother's letters and was inherited by his eldest brother. This was 'indifference to other people's opinions of them and a modesty which even caused them to try to conceal their mental, educational, and moral superiority. It was as though they were ashamed of those advantages.'

Five children were born to Nicholas and Márya Tolstóy. First four sons, of whom Leo was the youngest. His name in Russian is Lyón Nikoláevich (Leo, son-of-Nicholas) Tolstóy. Leo Tolstóy is the way he signed himself when using the Latin alphabet; and when pronouncing his name it should be remembered that the accent falls on the second syllable, and that it rhymes with 'boy'. The fancy spellings Tolstoi and Tolstoï are due to the fact that the early translators relied on French versions, and did not

know how Tolstóy spelt or pronounced his name.¹ He
 1828 was born on 28th August 1828 (o.s) at Yásnaya
 Polyána, with a caul—which in Russia, as in Eng-
 land, is considered a sign of good fortune.

A year and a half later a daughter, Márya, was born
 on 7th March 1830, and five months later the mother
 died.

Pilgrims, monks, nuns, and various half-crazy devotees
 were frequent visitors at the house, and even took up
 their abode there. One of these was a nun, Márya
 Gerásimovna, who in her youth had made pilgrimage
 to various holy places dressed as a man. After the birth
 of four boys Tolstóy's mother longed for a daughter,
 and promised that if one were granted her, she would
 take as the baby's godmother the first pilgrim who should
 be met by her messenger on the neighbouring high road.
 The next child really was a daughter, and the first
 pilgrim met was Márya Gerásimovna who was travelling
 dressed as a boy. Thereafter Márya Gerásimovna,
 though she lived partly in the Túla convent, was free of
 the Tolstóy's house and spent much of her time there.

Tolstóy gives us his earliest reminiscences in an auto-
 biographical fragment published in 1878.

These are my first recollections. I cannot arrange them in
 order for I do not know which come first or last. Of some of
 them I do not even know whether they happened in a dream
 or when I was awake. I lie bound² and wish to stretch out my
 arms, but cannot. I scream and cry, and my screams are dis-
 agreeable to myself but I cannot stop. Some one—I do not
 remember who—bends over me. This all happens in semi-
 darkness. I only know there were two people there. My cries
 affect them: they are agitated by my screams but do not untie
 me as I want them to, and I scream still louder. To them it
 seems necessary that I should be bound, but I know it is
 unnecessary and I wish to prove this to them and again burst
 into cries which are unpleasant to myself but are yet unre-

¹ See Appendix A.

² Russian babies are usually swaddled tightly with bands,
 making them look like fresh mummies.

strainable. I feel the injustice and cruelty—not of people, for they pity me, but—of fate, and I pity myself. I do not know and shall never know what it was all about: whether I was swaddled while still a baby at the breast and struggled to free my hands; whether they swaddled me when I was more than a year old to prevent my scratching some sore, or whether I have gathered into this one recollection (as one does in a dream) many different impressions. The one sure thing is, that this was the first and strongest impression of my life. And what remains on my memory is not my cries nor my suffering, but the complexity and contradictoriness of the impressions. I desire freedom, it would harm no one, but I who need strength am weak, while they are strong.

The next impression is a pleasant one. I am sitting in a tub and am surrounded by a new and not unpleasant smell of something with which they are rubbing my tiny body. Probably it was bran put into the water of my bath; the novelty of the sensation caused by the bran aroused me, and for the first time I became aware of, and liked, my own little body with the visible ribs on my breast, and the smooth dark wooden tub, the bared arms of my nurse, the warm steaming swirling water, the noise it made, and especially the smooth feel of the wet rim of the tub as I passed my hands along it.

My next recollections belong to the time when I was five or six, and there are very few of them, and not one that relates to life outside the walls of the house. Nature, up to the age of five, did not exist for me. All that I remember happened in bed or in our rooms. Neither grass, nor leaves, nor sky, nor sun, existed for me. It cannot be that no one ever gave me flowers and leaves to play with, that I never saw any grass, that they never shaded me from the sun, but up to the time when I was five or six years old I have no recollection of what we call Nature. Probably, to see it one has to be separate from it, and I was Nature.

The recollection that comes next after the tub is that of Ereméevna. 'Ereméevna' was the name with which they used to frighten us children. Probably they had long frightened us with it, but my recollection of it is this: I am in bed and feel well and happy as usual, and I should not remember it but that suddenly the nurse, or some one of those who made up my life, says something in a voice new to me, and then goes away; and in addition to being happy I am also frightened. And besides me there is some one else like me. (Probably my sister Márya, whose crib stood in the same room.)

And I now remember a curtain near my bed; and both my sister and I are happy and frightened at the strange thing happening to us, and I hide in my pillow: hide, and glance at the door from behind which I expect something new and merry. We laugh, and hide, and wait. And then some one appears in a dress and cap quite unknown to me, but I recognize that it is the same person who is always with us (whether my nurse or aunt I do not remember), and this some one says something about bad children and about Ereméevna in a gruff voice which I recognize. And I squeal with fear and pleasure and really am frightened, and yet am glad to be frightened and do not want her who is frightening me to know that I have recognized her. We become quiet, but presently begin whispering to one another again on purpose that Ereméevna may come back.

I have another recollection similar to this of Ereméevna (but as it is clearer it probably belongs to a later date) which has always remained inexplicable to me. In this recollection the chief part is played by our German tutor, Theodore Ivánich, but I am sure I was not yet in his charge, so the event must have taken place before I was five. It is my first recollection of Theodore Ivánich, and it took place at so early an age that I can remember no one else: neither my brothers nor my father nor any one. If I have some notion of some one individual person, it is only of my sister, and this only because she, like me, was afraid of Ereméevna. With this recollection is joined my first conception of the fact that our house had an upper story. How I climbed there—whether I went by myself or whether some one carried me—I have quite forgotten, but I remember that many of us are there and we all form a circle holding each other's hands; among us are some women I did not know (for some reason I remember that they were washerwomen), and we all begin to go round and to jump; and Theodore Ivánich jumps, lifting his legs too high and too loudly and noisily, and I at one and the same instant feel that this is wrong and depraved and notice him and (I believe) begin to cry—and all is over.

That is all I remember up to the age of five. I remember neither my nurses, aunts, brothers, sister, nor my father, nor the rooms, nor my toys. My more distinct recollections begin from the time I was moved downstairs to Theodore Ivánich and the elder boys.

When I was moved downstairs to Theodore Ivánich and the boys I experienced for the first time, and therefore more

strongly than ever since, the feeling which is called the sense of duty, the consciousness of the cross every man is called upon to bear. It was hard to leave what I was accustomed to from the beginning of things, and I was sad, poetically sad, not so much at parting from people: sister, nurse, and aunt, as at parting with my crib, the curtain, and the pillow; and I feared the new life into which I was entering. I tried to see the jolly side of this new life awaiting me; I tried to believe the caressing words with which Theodore Ivánich lured me to him. I tried not to see the contempt with which the boys received me—the youngest boy. I tried to think it was a shame for a big boy to live with girls, and that there was nothing good in the life upstairs with nurse; but my heart was terribly sad, I knew I was irreparably losing my innocence and happiness, and only a feeling of personal dignity and the consciousness of doing my duty upheld me. (Often in after-life I have experienced similar moments at the parting of cross-roads, when entering on a fresh course.) I experienced quiet grief at the irreparability of my loss; I was unable to believe that it would really happen, though I had been told that I should be moved to the boys' rooms. I remember that the dressing-gown with a cord sewn to its back, which they put on me, seemed to cut me off for ever from upstairs, and I then for the first time observed—not all those with whom I had lived upstairs, but—the chief person with whom I lived and whom I did not remember before. This was my Auntie Tatiána Alexándrovna Érgolski. I remember her short, stout, black-haired, kindly, tender, and compassionate. It was she who put the dressing-gown on me and, embracing me and kissing me, tied it round my waist; and I saw that she felt as I did, that it was sad, terribly sad, but had to be; and for the first time I felt that life is not a game but a serious matter.

‘Auntie’ Tatiána Alexándrovna Érgolski, mentioned in the above reminiscences, was a very distant relative, who being left an orphan, had been brought up by Tolstóy’s paternal grandparents. She was very attractive and affectionate. She loved Count Nicholas, Leo’s father, but stood aside that he might marry the rich Princess Márya Volkónski and repair the family fortunes. Six years after his wife’s death Count Nicholas asked Tatiána to marry him and be a mother to his children. Not wishing (Tolstóy tells us) to spoil her pure,

poetic relations with the family, she refused the first but fulfilled the second of these requests.

The joyousness of Tolstóy's boyhood was largely due to the care and affection of this excellent woman, and in the most firmly rooted of his principles—such as his detestation of corporal punishment and his approval of complete chastity—it is easy to trace her unconscious influence.

Here, for instance, is one episode:

We children were returning home from a walk with our tutor, when near the barn we met the fat steward, Andrew, followed by the coachman's assistant, 'Squinting Kuzmá' as he was called, whose face was sad. He was a married man and no longer young. One of us asked Andrew where he was going, and he quietly replied that he was going to the barn where Kuzmá had to be punished. I cannot describe the dreadful feeling these words and the sight of the good-natured crest-fallen Kuzmá produced on me. In the evening I told this to my Auntie Tatiána, who hated corporal punishment and wherever she had influence never allowed it for us any more than for the serfs. She was greatly revolted at what I told her and rebuking me said, 'Why did you not stop him?' Her words grieved me still more. . . . I never thought that we could interfere in such things and yet it appeared that we could. But it was too late and the dreadful deed had been done.

To sum up what we know of Tolstóy's antecedents on both sides he came of people who had little sympathy either with the reactionary autocratic rule that succeeded the liberal tendencies of the early years of Alexander I or with the harsh treatment to which the serfs were sometimes exposed. A cousin of Tolstóy's mother was one of the Decembrist conspirators, and on the accession of Nicholas I in 1825 took part in their abortive attempt to overthrow the autocracy. He was exiled to Siberia for thirty years, doing hard labour in irons part of the time. His wife (another Princess Márya Volkónski) voluntarily accompanied him, as Nekrásov has told in a well-known Russian poem. Towards the end of their lives several members of the family retired into convent or monasteries.

We find strong family love pervading the households of Tolstóy's parents and grandparents, and even after their death Tolstóy's nature ripened in a congenial atmosphere of family affection, and many of his most pronounced sympathies and antipathies were not peculiar to himself but were shared by other members of the family.

CHAPTER II

CHILDHOOD AND EARLY MANHOOD

As already mentioned, Yásnaya Polyána (Clear Glade) where Tolstóy was born, had been an ancestral estate of the Volkónskis and belonged to his mother, Princess Márya. It is situated ten miles south of Túla, in a pleasantly undulating country. The estate is well wooded and has many avenues of lime-trees, a river, and four ponds. In Tolstóy's grandfather's time, sentinels kept guard at the small, round, brick towers which now stand neglected at the entrance of the main birch avenue leading to the house. Something of the great confidence in himself and readiness to despise others, which despite all his efforts to be humble characterized Tolstóy, may have been due to the fact that he was born and grew up on an estate where for generations his ancestors had been the only people of importance.

'Auntie' Tatiána Alexándrovna Érgolski had been brought up by Tolstóy's paternal grandmother in a equality with her own children. She (Tatiána) was resolute, self-sacrificing, and, says Tolstóy,

must have been very attractive with her enormous plait of crisp, black, curly hair, her jet-black eyes, and vivacious energetic expression. When I remember her she was more than forty and I never thought about her as pretty or not pretty. I simply loved her eyes, her smile, and her dusky broad little hand with its energetic cross vein.

We had two aunts and a grandmother; they all had more right to us than Tatiána Alexándrovna, whom we called Aunt only by habit (for our kinship was so distant that I could never remember what it was), but she took the first place in our upbringing by right of love to us (like Buddha in the story of the wounded swan), and we felt her right.

I had fits of passionately tender love for her.

I remember once, when I was about five, how I squeezed behind her on the sofa in the drawing-room and she cared

ingly touched me with her hand. I caught it and began to kiss it and to cry with tender love of her. . . .

Auntie Tatiána had the greatest influence on my life. From early childhood she taught me the spiritual delight of love. She taught me this joy not by words, but by her whole being she filled me with love. I saw, I felt, how she enjoyed loving, and I understood the joy of love. This was the first thing.

Secondly, she taught me the delights of an unhurried, quiet, life.

Another though much less important influence was that of the tutor, Theodore Rössel (who figures as Karl Iványch Mauer in Tolstóy's early story, *Childhood*). Tolstóy owed his excellent knowledge of German and French to the fact that his father, following a custom common among well-to-do Russians, engaged foreign teachers and let his children learn languages not so much from books as by conversation while they were still quite young. Rössel's 'honest, straightforward, and loving nature' helped to develop the boy's good qualities.

Tolstóy got on well too with his three brothers, who were five, two and a half, and one year and four months, older than himself, as well as with his little sister Márya, his junior by a year and a half.

He not only loved, but deeply respected, his eldest brother Nicholas (pet name, Nikólenka), whose influence lasted until, and even after, his death in 1860. Of him Tolstóy says:

He was a wonderful boy, and later a wonderful man. Turgénev used to say of him, very truly, that he only lacked certain faults to be a great writer. He lacked the chief fault needed for authorship—vanity, and was not at all interested in what people thought of him. The qualities of a writer that he possessed were, first of all a fine artistic sense, an extremely developed sense of proportion, a good-natured, gay, sense of humour, an extraordinary inexhaustible imagination, and a truthful and highly moral view of life; and all this without the slightest conceit. His imagination was such that for hours together he could tell fairy-tales or ghost stories or amusing tales in the style of Mrs. Radcliffe, without a pause and with such vivid realization of what he was narrating that one forgot

it was all invention. . . . When he was not narrating or reading (he read a great deal) he used to draw. He almost invariably drew devils with horns and twisted moustaches, intertwined in the most varied attitudes and engaged in the most diverse occupations. These drawings were also full of imagination.

It was he who, when I was five and my brothers Dmítri six and Sergéy seven, announced to us that he possessed a secret by means of which, when disclosed, all men would become happy: there would be no more disease, no trouble, no one would be angry with anybody, all would love one another, and all would become 'Ant-Brothers'. . . . We even organized a game of Ant-Brothers, which consisted in sitting under chairs, sheltering ourselves with boxes, screening ourselves with shawls, and cuddling against one another while thus crouching in the dark. . . . The Ant-Brotherhood was revealed to us but not the chief secret—the way for all men to cease suffering any misfortune, to leave off quarrelling and being angry, and become continuously happy—this secret he said he had written on a green stick buried by the road at the edge of a certain ravine, at which spot (since my body must be buried somewhere) I have asked to be buried in memory of Nikólenka. Besides this little stick there was also a certain Fanfarónov Hill, up which he said he could lead us if only we would fulfil all the appointed conditions. These were: first, to stand in a corner and not think of a white bear. I remember how I used to get into a corner and try (but could not possibly manage) not to think of a white bear. The second condition was to walk without wavering along a crack between the boards of the floor; and the third was, for a whole year not to see a hare, alive or dead or cooked; and it was necessary to swear not to reveal these secrets to any one. He who fulfilled these and other more difficult conditions which Nikólenka would communicate later, would have one wish, whatever it might be, fulfilled.

Nikólenka, as I now conjecture, had probably read or heard of the Freemasons—of their aspirations towards the happiness of mankind, and of the mysterious rites of initiation to their order; he had probably also heard about the Moravian Brothers [in Russian *ant* is *muravý*].

Writing when he was over seventy, Tolstóy added:

The ideal of ant-brothers lovingly clinging to one another, though not under two arm-chairs curtained by shawls but

of all mankind under the wide dome of heaven, has remained unaltered in me. As I then believed that there existed a little green stick whereon was written the message which would destroy all evil in men and give them universal welfare, so I now believe that such truth exists and will be revealed to men and will give them all its promises.

When he died, Tolstóy was actually buried on the spot endeared to him by the imaginary green stick and by the longing for human brotherhood aroused by his eldest brother's story.

It was, however, Tolstóy's second brother, Sergéy (pet name, Serëzha), whom Tolstóy in his young days most enthusiastically admired and wished to imitate. Sergéy was handsome, proud, straightforward, and singularly sincere. Of him Leo Tolstóy says:

I loved and wished to be like him. I admired his handsome appearance, his singing (he was always singing), his drawing, his gaiety, and especially (strange as it may seem to say so) the spontaneity of his egotism. I myself was always aware of myself and self-conscious; I always guessed, rightly or wrongly, what other people thought or felt about me, and this spoilt my joy in life. This probably is why in others I specially liked the opposite feature—spontaneity of egotism. And for this I specially loved Serëzha. The word *loved* is not correct. I loved Nikólenka; but for Serëzha I was filled with admiration as for something quite apart from and incomprehensible to me.

Of the third brother, Dmítri (pet name, Mítenka), only a year older than himself, Tolstóy tells us:

I hardly remember him as a boy. I only know by hearsay that as a child he was very capricious. He was nearest to me in age and I played with him oftenest, but did not love him as much as I loved Serëzha, nor as I loved and respected Nikólenka. He and I lived together amicably. I do not recollect that we quarrelled. Probably we did, and we may even have fought. . . . As a child I remember nothing special about Mítenka except his childish merriment.

A girl, Dúnechka Temeshóv, was adopted as a

member of the family. She was the natural daughter of a wealthy bachelor friend of Tolstóy's father.

I remember how when I had already learnt French I was made to teach her that alphabet. At first it went all right (we were both about five years old), but later she probably grew tired and ceased to name correctly the letters I pointed out. I insisted. She began to cry. I did the same, and when our elders came we could say nothing owing to our helpless tears.

In his later recollections of her he says:

She was not clever, but was a good, simple girl; and, above all, so pure that we boys never had any but brotherly relations with her.

The relations between the family and its servants, who were serfs and of whom there were about thirty, were, as in many a Russian family, often really affectionate. One instance of a serf's devotion has already been quoted, and such cases were not rare. In *Childhood*, under the name of Natálya Sávishna, mention is made of the old housekeeper, Praskóvya Isáevna, who was completely devoted to the welfare of the family, and Tolstóy says: 'All that I there wrote about her was actual truth.'

Here is another example illustrating both kindly toleration of minor offences committed by a serf, and the family affection which sweetened life:

My pleasantest recollections of my father are of his sitting with grandmother on the sofa helping her to play patience. My father was polite and tender with every one, but to my grandmother he was always particularly tender and submissive. They used to sit—Grandma playing patience and from time to time taking pinches from a gold snuff-box. My aunts sit in armchairs, and one of them reads aloud. We children come in to say good-night, and sometimes sit there. We always take leave of Grandma and our aunts by kissing their hands. I remember once, in the middle of a game of patience and of the reading, my father interrupts my aunt, points to a looking-glass and whispers something. We all look in the same direction. It was the footman Tíkhon, who (knowing that my father was in the drawing-room) was going into the study to take some tobacco from a big leather folding tobacco-

pouch. My father sees him in the looking-glass and notices his figure stepping carefully on tiptoe. My aunts laugh. Grandmama for a long time does not understand, but when she does she too smiles cheerfully. I am enchanted by my father's kindness, and on taking leave of him kiss his white muscular hand with special tenderness.

In *Childhood* the following passage occurs, which certainly expresses his own feeling:

Happy, happy, irrevocable days of childhood! How can one fail to love and cherish their memory? Those memories refresh and elevate my soul and are the source of my greatest delight. . . . What time can be better than that in which the two finest virtues—innocent joy and an unbounded need to love—are the only motives in one's life?

And in his *Recollections* Tolstóy tells us that:

All who surrounded me in childhood, from my father to the coachman, seem to me to have been exceptionally good people. Probably my pure, loving feeling, like a bright beam, revealed to me the best qualities in people (such qualities always exist); but to regard them as exceptionally good was much nearer the truth than it would have been to see only their faults. . . .

Tolstóy's sister, Márya, tells us that his enjoyment of life was remarkable; he was like a ray of light. He would run into the room with a happy smile as if he had made a discovery about which he wished to tell every one. He was fond of jests: was always tender, kindly, yielding, and never rude. If he were petted, tears would come into his eyes; if his brothers offended him he would go away and cry. If some one asked him: 'What is it, Lëvchka? What is the matter?' he would reply: 'They offend me,' and would go on crying.

He always cried very easily, and was nicknamed *Lëva-Rëva*, 'Leo Cry-baby'.

In his *Recollections* he tells us how, when he was about eight years old, his father once made him read Púshkin's poems *To the Sea* and *Napoleon*, of which he, Leo, was fond and which he had learnt by heart. He says:

He was evidently struck by the feeling with which I recited

the verses, and exchanged significant glances with Yazýkov [Leo's godfather] who was there. I understood that he saw something good in my reading, and this made me very happy.

From childhood to the end of his life Tolstóy was quite exceptionally susceptible to music. In one version of *Childhood* he describes how in the evening 'Mama' played Field and Beethoven, and the feelings of little Nikólenka as he listened to her performance, sitting with his feet up on an easy-chair in the drawing-room.

Mama finished Field's Concerto, rose from the round stool, took another book of music, opened it on the music-stand, drew the candles nearer, and after adjusting her dress again sat down to the piano. By the care with which she did all this and the thoughtfully severe expression of her face it seemed that she was preparing for something very serious. 'Something is going to happen,' thought I, and again closed my eyes, pressing my head into the corner of the arm-chair. The smell of the dust I disturbed in turning round tickled my nostrils, and the familiar sounds of the piece Mama was playing produced in me a sweet impression and at the same time disturbed me. She was playing Beethoven's Sonata Pathétique. Though I knew the whole Sonata so well that there was nothing new to me in it, it disturbed me so that I could not fall asleep. What if it suddenly went not as I had expected? The restrained, majestic, but agitated, *motif* of the Introduction, which seems to fear to express itself, made me hold my breath. The more beautiful and more complex the musical phrase the stronger became the feeling of fear lest anything should disturb this beauty, and the stronger the feeling of delight when the phrase was harmoniously resolved.

I only became tranquil when the *motif* of the Introduction has said everything and resolved itself loudly and harmoniously into the Allegro. The commencement of the Allegro is too usual, and therefore I was not fond of it. Listening to it, one rested from the strong sensations of the opening pages. But what could be better than the place where the questions and answers begin? At first the conversation is quiet and tender: but suddenly, in the bass, some one utters two stern phrases full of passion, to which it seems as if there could be no reply. . . . But no! There is a reply, and the reply becomes better and better and yet stronger, until at last everything mingles into a kind of obscure, disquieting murmur. That

part always surprised me; and the feeling of surprise was as strong as though I were hearing it for the first time. Afterwards, amid the noise of the Allegro, an echo of the Introduction is suddenly heard. Then the conversation is again repeated, again comes the echo, and suddenly, at the moment when one's soul is so agitated by these constant alarms that it begs for rest, it all finishes, and finishes so unexpectedly and beautifully. . . .

During the Andante I drowsed; one's soul was tranquil, joyful, one was ready to smile, and one had a dream of something light, white, and transparent. But the Rondo in C minor aroused me. 'What is he speaking about? Where is he asking to go? What does he want?' And one wishes it all to finish quicker, quicker, quicker; but when he had ceased to weep and to entreat I wanted still to hear the passionate expression of his sufferings.

Childhood is a story and not an autobiographical work, and Tolstóy's mother died long before he could appreciate the Sonata Pathétique, but we can hardly be wrong in assuming that this description, written when Tolstóy was twenty-three, describes his own sensations as a child, and probably the lady who really performed the piece was Tolstóy's sister's governess, who in later years taught her to play this Sonata herself.

An important feature of the life in which Tolstóy grew up was furnished by the half-crazy saints who swarmed in Russia in those days. Readers of *Childhood* will remember Grísha, an admirable specimen of that class, about whom Tolstóy makes the following characteristic note in his memoirs:

Grísha is an invented character. We had many of these half-crazy saints at our house, and I was taught to regard them with profound respect, for which I am deeply grateful to those who brought me up. If there were some among them who were insincere, or who experienced periods of weakness and insincerity, yet the aim of their life, though practically absurd, was so lofty that I am glad I learned in childhood unconsciously to understand the height of their achievement. They accomplished what Marcus Aurelius speaks of when he says: 'There is nothing higher than to endure contempt for one's good life.' So harmful and so unavoidable is the desire

for human glory which always contaminates good deeds, that one cannot but sympathize with the effort not merely to avoid praise but even to evoke contempt. Such a character was Márya Gerásimovna, my sister's godmother, and the semi-idiot Evdokímushka, and some others in our house.

How deeply these early impressions were engraved on Tolstóy's mind is obvious from his earliest as well as his latest writings. Take for instance the lines from *Childhood* referring to Grísha's prayer overheard by the children.

Much water has flowed since then, many memories of the past have lost their meaning for me and become dim recollections, even the pilgrim Grísha has long since completed his last pilgrimage; but the impression he made on me and the feeling he evoked, will never die in my memory.

In Tolstóy's later life we shall again and again find this medieval note recurring (with whatever of truth or falsity it contains), and the assertion that it is not the usefulness or uselessness of a man's life that matters so much as his self-abnegation and the humility of his soul.

To complete the picture of Tolstóy's early boyhood at Yásnaya Polyána, we must think of him as interested in his father's dogs and horses and hunting (in *Childhood* he tells the true story of how he hunted his first hare), and also in the games and masquerades with which the family and visitors, as well as the servants, amused themselves, especially at New Year.

Despite his sensitive introspective nature, Tolstóy's childhood was a happy one, and to it he always looked back with pleasure. He speaks of 'that splendid, innocent, joyful, poetic period of childhood, up to fourteen', and tells us that the impressions of early childhood, preserved in one's memory, grow in some unfathomable depth of the soul like seeds thrown on good ground, till after many years they thrust their bright, green shoots into God's world.

When Tolstóy was eight years old the family moved to Moscow for his elder brothers' education. The following

summer they lost their father, who, having gone to Túla on business, fell down in the street on his way to visit his friend Temeshóv, and died of apoplexy. What 1837 money he had with him was stolen, but some un-negotiable bonds were brought back to the Tolstóys in Moscow by an unknown beggar. The funeral took place at Yásnaya Polyána; and Leo, who did not attend it, long fancied that his father was not really dead. Looking at the faces of strangers in the streets of Moscow, he felt almost certain he might at any moment again meet him alive.

This event brought the problems of life and death vividly to the boy's mind, and nine months later the impression was intensified by the death of his grandmother, who never recovered from the shock of her son's death. Hers was the first death Tolstóy witnessed, and he never forgot the horror he felt when, as she lay dying of dropsy, he was admitted to kiss her swollen white hand and saw her, dressed in white, lying motionless on a high white bed. But he says:

I remember that new jackets of black material braided with white were made for all of us. It was dreadful to see the undertaker's men hanging about near the house and then bringing in the coffin with its lid covered with glazed brocade, and my grandmother's stern face with its Roman nose, and her white cap and the white kerchief on her neck, lying high in the coffin on the table; and it was sad to see the tears of our aunts and of Páshenka; but yet the new braided jackets and the soothing attitude adopted towards us by those around gratified us. . . . I remember how pleasant it was to me to overhear during the funeral the conversation of some gossiping female guests, who said, 'Complete orphans; their father only lately dead and now the grandmother gone too.'

Some time after this, an event occurred that is recorded on the first page of Tolstóy's *Confession* :

I remember how, when I was about eleven, a boy Vladímir Milútin, a Grammar School pupil, visited us one Sunday and announced as the latest novelty a discovery made at his School. The discovery was that there is no God and all that

we are taught about Him is a mere invention. I remember how interested my elder brothers were in this news. They called me to their council and we all, I remember, became animated, and accepted the news as something very interesting and fully possible.

Various stories have been preserved relating to Tolstóy's boyhood and some of them are sufficiently characteristic to be worth repeating.

One incident which made a strong impression on the lad, keenly sensitive as he always was to any shade of injustice, was the following:

Soon after the death of their father and grandmother, the orphan Tolstóys, then living in rather straitened circumstances owing to their property being left in trust, were invited to a Christmas Tree at the house of an acquaintance, and the young Princes Gorchakóv, nephews of the then Minister of War, were also among the guests. All the children received presents; but whereas the Gorchakóvs had expensive ones, the Tolstóys, to their annoyance, received cheap common ones.

Other stories, told by Tolstóy himself or by the family, illustrate his impulsive, imaginative, strenuous, and rather erratic nature at this period.

When he was about seven or eight years old he had an ardent desire to fly, and persuaded himself that it was possible to do so. It was only necessary to sit down on your heels clasping your arms firmly round your knees and the tighter you held them the higher you would fly. As Tolstóy was always ardent to put his beliefs into practice it is not very surprising that one day, soon after the family had moved to Moscow, he stayed behind in the class-room when he should have come down to dinner, and climbing out on to the window-sill, some six yards from the ground, threw himself out. He was picked up unconscious. The ill results of his fall were fortunately confined to a slight concussion of the brain and after sleeping for eighteen hours on end he woke up again quite well.

As already mentioned it would be a mistake to take his story, *Childhood*, as autobiographical; but it contains many passages one knows from other sources to be true of his own life, and one such is that in which (speaking in the character of Nikólenka) he says:

I knew very well that I was not good-looking . . . so that every reference to my appearance offended me painfully. . . . There were moments when I was overcome by despair: I imagined that there could be no happiness on earth for one with such a broad nose, such thick lips, and such small, grey eyes as mine; and I asked God to perform a miracle, and make me handsome, and all I then had and everything I might have in future I would have given for a handsome face.

In fact his personal appearance caused the sensitive lad much concern, but his efforts to improve it were unsuccessful. On one occasion he clipped his eyebrows, and the unsatisfactory results occasioned him great grief.

He records in his *Reminiscences* the following incident which certainly intensified his lifelong antipathy to corporal punishment:

I do not remember for what, but for something quite undeserving of punishment, St. Thomas (the resident French tutor who succeeded Rössel) first locked me in a room and then threatened to flog me. I thereupon experienced a dreadful feeling of anger, resentment, and disgust, not only towards St. Thomas himself but towards the violence with which I was threatened.

When quite a small boy he conceived an attachment for the nine-year-old daughter of his father's friend, Islénev, and being jealous of her for daring to talk to others, he angrily pushed her off a balcony, with the result that she limped for a long time afterwards. A quarter of a century later, when he married this lady's daughter, his mother-in-law used laughingly to remind him of the incident and say, 'Evidently you pushed me off the balcony in my childhood that you might marry my daughter afterwards!'

His sister relates that once when they were driving

in a troika (i.e. with three horses abreast) to Yásnaya, Leo got down during a break in the journey and went forward on foot. When the carriage started again and began to overtake him he took to running, and when the horses went faster he also increased his speed, racing as hard as he could. He was not overtaken till he had gone about two miles and was completely tired out. He was lifted back into the carriage gasping for breath, perspiring, and quite exhausted. Those not endowed with the remarkable physical vigour that, in spite of frequent attacks of ill-health, characterized Tolstóy through life, would probably have done themselves serious injury had they taxed their vital resources as recklessly as he often did.

All accounts agree in representing him as an original and odd little fellow, unwilling to do things like other people. He would for instance enter a drawing-room and, carefully placing his feet together and bending his head, make his bow backwards, saluting each of the company in turn.

Two incidents are recorded relating to the love of riding which remained a characteristic of his through life.

When his brothers were sent to a riding-school, Leo (in spite of his father's assurances and those of the riding-master that he was too small to begin and would tumble off) also obtained permission to learn to ride. At his first lesson he duly tumbled off, but begged to be replaced in the saddle and did not fall off again, but quickly became an expert rider. In one of the short stories he wrote many years later for the use of school-children, he tells how he once wished to ride the old horse Raven after his brothers had each had a turn on it, and how Raven being too tired to move from the stables, he beat it till he broke his switch on its sides. He then demanded a stouter switch from the serf in charge, but the man replied:

'Ah, master, you have no pity! Why do you beat him? He is twenty years old and is tired out; he can hardly breathe.

Why, for a horse, he is as old as Timoféich [a very old peasant living at the place]. You might as well get on Timoféich's back and drive him beyond his strength like that with a switch. Would you feel no pity for him?"

I thought of Timoféich and listened to the man. I got off the horse's back; and when I noticed how its steaming sides were working and how heavily it breathed through its nostrils, swishing its thin tail, I understood how hard it was for it. Till then I had thought that it was as happy as I was myself. And I felt so sorry for Raven that I began to kiss his sweaty neck and to beg his pardon for having beaten him.

Since then I have grown up, but I always have pity on horses and always remember Raven and Timoféich when I see horses ill-treated.

He does not appear to have been very good at his lessons, and somewhere mentions the dictum of a student who used to coach his brothers and himself, and said of their aptitude for learning:

Nicholas wishes and can, Sergéy can but won't, Dmítri wishes but can't (this was not true), and Leo neither wishes nor can. (That, I think, was perfectly true.)

On the other hand, St. Thomas, the French tutor already referred to (he figures in *Childhood* as St. Jérôme), must have noticed the lad's capacity, for he used to say, 'Ce petit a une tête: c'est un petit Molière' [This little one has a head: he is a little Molière].

After the father's death the family property passed under the control of the Court of Wards, and
1838 expenses had to be cut down. It was therefore decided that though the two elder brothers must remain in Moscow for the sake of their education, the three younger children should return to Yásnaya Polyána, where living was cheaper, in the charge of their much-loved Auntie Tatiána. Their legal guardian, the Countess Alexándra ('Aline') Ilýnishna Osten-Saken, remained in Moscow with the elder boys.

This lady had made what seemed a brilliant marriage with the wealthy Count Osten-Saken, whose family was among the first in the Baltic Provinces, but her married

life was a terrible one. Her husband went out of his mind and tried to kill her. While he was confined in an asylum the Countess gave birth to a still-born child. To save her from this fresh shock, a girl born of a servant was substituted for the still-born baby. This girl, Páshenka, lived with the Tolstóy family and was already grown up when Tolstóy was quite a child. Subsequently the Countess Alexándra lived first with her parents and then with her brother, Tolstóy's father. She was a devotee of the Orthodox Russo-Greek Church of which Tolstóy eventually became so fierce an opponent, but much in her character and conduct accords with the precepts laid down in his later writings, and it is evident that certain aspects of his understanding of the Christian character which strike most Englishmen as peculiar, far from being invented by him, are derived from a deeply-rooted Russian and family tradition. He tells us :

My aunt was a truly religious woman. Her favourite occupation was reading the Lives of the Saints, conversing with pilgrims, half-crazy devotees, monks and nuns, of whom some always lived in our house while others only visited my aunt. . . . She was not merely outwardly religious, keeping the fasts, praying much, and associating with people of saintly life, but she herself lived a truly Christian life, trying not only to avoid all luxury and acceptance of service, but herself serving others as much as possible. She never had any money for she gave away all she had to those who asked. A servant related to me how, during their life in Moscow, my aunt used carefully on tiptoe to pass her sleeping maid when going to Matins, and used herself to perform all the duties which in those days it was customary for a maid to perform. In food and dress she was as simple and unexacting as can possibly be imagined. Unpleasant as it is to me to mention it, I remember from childhood a specific acid smell connected with my aunt, probably due to negligence in her toilet: and this was the graceful poetic Aline with beautiful eyes, who used to love reading and copying French verses, who played on the harp, and always had great success at the grandest balls! I remember how affectionate and kind she always was, and this equally to the most important men and women and to the nuns and pilgrims.

Tolstóy goes on to tell how pleasantly she bore the jests and the teasing that her devotion to the priests brought upon her.

I remember her dear good-natured laugh and her face shining with pleasure. The religious feeling which filled her soul was evidently so important to her, so much higher than anything else, that she could not be angry or annoyed at anything, and could not attribute to worldly matters the importance others attach to them.

In the summer of 1839 the whole family assembled at Yásnaya Polyána, but they had returned to Moscow by September when the Emperor Nicholas I visited Moscow to lay the foundation-stone of the Cathedral of Our Saviour (built to commemorate the liberation of Russia from Napoleon in 1812). Tolstóy witnessed the ceremony from the window of a neighbouring house, and judging by an apparently autobiographical passage in one of the drafts of *Childhood* he was also in a crowd which cheered the Emperor as he drove from the Krémelin palace. No doubt the scene in *War and Peace* where Pétya Rostóv sees Alexander I pass in the Krémelin was based on that experience.

The next year, 1840, was a famine year. The crops were so poor that corn had to be bought to feed 1840 the serfs, and to raise funds for this purpose one of the Tolstóys' estates had to be sold. The supply of oats for the horses was stopped, and Tolstóy remembers how he and his brothers, pitying their ponies, secretly gathered oats for them in the peasants' fields, quite unconscious of the crime they were committing.

In the winter of that year the whole family moved to Moscow, returning to Yásnaya for the following summer. The next autumn their guardian, the kind good Countess Alexándra Osten-Saken, died in the Convent, or 'Hermitage', founded by Óptin (a robber chief of the fourteenth century) in the Government of Kalúga, to which she had retired.

After her death her sister, Pelagéya Ilyníshna Yúshkov, became their guardian. She was the wife of a

Kazán landowner. Auntie Tatiána and she were not on friendly terms; there was no open quarrel between them, but V. I. Yúshkov (Pelagéya's husband) had been a suitor for Tatiána's hand in his youth and had been rejected. Pelagéya could not forgive her husband's old love for Tatiána.

The change of guardianship led to the removal of the family to Kazán in the autumn of 1841, when Leo Tolstóy was thirteen, and the children were separated from Auntie Tatiána, much to her grief, but returned to Yásnaya Polyána every summer.

The books which up to the age of fourteen most influenced Tolstóy were, he tells us, the Story of Joseph from the Bible, the *Forty Thieves* and *Prince Camaralzaman* from the *Arabian Nights*, various Russian folk-legends, Púshkin's *Tales* and his poem *Napoleon*, as well as *The Black Hen* (a fairy tale) by Pogorélski. The influence the story of Joseph had on him, he says, was 'immense', and in later life he instanced it as an example of the 'brevity, simplicity, and sincerity' characteristic of that supreme art which has the widest appeal.

In his aptitude for abstract speculation, as in other respects, the boy was truly father to the man, and in a passage, certainly autobiographical, in *Boyhood*, he says:

It will hardly be believed what were my favourite and most constant subjects of reflection during boyhood, so incompatible were they with my age and position. But in my opinion the incompatibility of a man's position with his moral activity is the surest indication of his searching for truth. . . .

At one time the idea occurred to me that happiness does not depend on external causes, but on our relation to those causes, and that a man accustomed to endure sufferings cannot be unhappy—and to inure myself to hardship, regardless of the severe pain I felt, I used to hold Tatischev's dictionaries out at arm's length for five minutes at a time, or went into the box-room and lashed my bare back with a rope so painfully that tears involuntarily appeared in my eyes.

At another time, remembering that death awaited me any hour and any minute, I understood, wondering why people had not understood it before, that one can only be happy by

enjoying the present and not thinking of the future, and, for three days, under the influence of this idea, I neglected to learn my lessons and did nothing but lie on my bed, enjoying myself by reading a novel, and eating gingerbread made with honey, on which I spent my last coins. . . . But by none of my philosophical tendencies was I so carried away as by scepticism, which at one time led me to the verge of insanity. I imagined that besides myself nobody and nothing existed in the universe, that objects were not objects at all, but images which appeared only when I paid attention to them, and as soon as I left off thinking of them, these images immediately disappeared. In a word, I coincided with Schelling in the conviction that not objects exist, but my relation to them. There were moments when, under the influence of this *idée fixe*, I reached such a state of insanity that I sometimes looked rapidly round to one side, hoping to catch nothingness (*néant*) un-awares where I was not. . . .

The philosophical discoveries I made flattered my vanity extremely: I often imagined myself a great man, discovering new truths for the benefit of mankind and, with a proud consciousness of my own worth, regarded the rest of humanity: but strangely enough when I encountered those other mortals, I felt shy of each of them, and the higher I set myself in my own estimation, the less was I capable not only of exhibiting the consciousness of my own dignity, but even of accustoming myself to avoid being ashamed of my simplest words and movements.

At the time of the move to Kazán a serf-lad of about his own age was presented to each of the young Tolstóys to attend on him. One of these, Vanúsha, later on accompanied Tolstóy to the Caucasus, and was still living in Túla, at a good old age, when last I heard of him.

For five and a half years, from the autumn of 1841 to the spring of 1847, the brothers lived at Kazán, returning each summer to Yásnaya for the vacations. They all entered Kazán University. The aunt who was their guardian and with whom they lived the greater part of the time, was a kind but not particularly clever woman. Her husband was wealthy and the house was the centre of much hospitality and gaiety.

Leo Tolstóy, with the idea of becoming a diplomat, prepared to enter the faculty of Oriental Languages, in which a knowledge of Arabic and Turco-Tartar was required. He worked hard, and matriculated in May 1844, before he was sixteen, passing excellently in French (for which he received the mark 5 +; 5 being in an ordinary way the highest mark, and the + indicating exceptional distinction); German, Arabic, and Turco-Tartar very well; and in English, Logic, Mathematics, and Russian Literature, well; but he did indifferently in Latin, and failed completely in History and Geography, getting the lowest mark, a 1, for each of these. Of History he says, 'I knew nothing,' and of Geography 'still less'; adding, 'I was asked to name the French seaports, but could not name a single one'. At the end of the summer vacation he was admitted for re-examination in the subjects in which he had failed, and then passed successfully.

We may assume that a passage such as the following from *Boyhood* records his own dreams at this age.

I was then nearly sixteen. Tutors still visited me and I was reluctantly and grudgingly preparing for the University. . .

At that period, which I regard as the end of boyhood and beginning of youth, my dreams were based on four feelings: love of *her*, the imaginary woman of whom I always dreamt in one and the same way and whom I expected at any moment to meet somewhere. . . . The second feeling was the love of being loved. I wanted everybody to know me and love me, I wanted to tell my name . . . and for everybody to be struck by this information, to surround me and thank me for something. The third feeling was hope of some unusual, vainglorious good-fortune and was so strong and firm that it verged on insanity. The fourth and chief feeling was self-disgust and repentance, but repentance so mingled with hope of happiness that it had nothing sad about it. . . . I even revelled in my repulsion for the past and tried to see it blacker than it really was. The blacker the circle of my recollections of the past, the clearer and brighter stood out the clear, bright point of the present and the fairer streamed the rainbow colours of the future. That voice of repentance and passionate desire for perfection was the main new sensation of my soul at this period of my

development, and it was this that laid a new foundation for my views of myself, of mankind, and of God's universe.

Oh, beneficent and comforting voice that hast so often since then—in sad times when my soul has silently submitted to the powers of worldly deceit and debauch—suddenly and boldly risen up against all falsehood, virulently denounced the past, showing me, and making me love, the bright point of the present, and promising welfare and happiness in the future—beneficent, comforting voice!—can it be that you will ever cease to make yourself heard?

The winter season when Tolstóy, as a student at the University and a young man of good position, entered Kazán society was a particularly gay one. He 1844-5 attended many balls, given by the Governor of the Province, by the *Maréchal de la Noblesse*, and by private people, as well as many masquerades, concerts, tableaux-vivants, and private theatricals. He was long remembered by old inhabitants as having been 'present at all the balls, soirées, and aristocratic parties, a welcome guest everywhere, and always dancing; but far from being a ladies' man he was distinguished by a strange awkwardness and shyness'. At Carnival time in 1845 he and his brother Sergéy took parts in two plays which were given very successfully for some charitable object.

As to the nature of Kazán society and of his surroundings there, accounts are contradictory. On the one hand, we have his own statement that (imitating his brother Sergéy in this as in other matters) he became 'depraved', and Zagóskin, a fellow-student of Tolstóy's at the University, says that the surroundings in which the latter moved were demoralizing and must have been repellent to him. On the other hand, on seeing Zagóskin's remarks, Tolstóy (in whom there was often observable a strong spirit of contradiction) replied:

I did not feel any repulsion but was very glad to enjoy myself in Kazán society which was then very good. I am on the contrary thankful to fate that I passed my first youth in an environment where a young man could be young without touching problems beyond his grasp, and that I lived a life which, though idle and luxurious, was yet not evil.

The explanation of these contradictions, no doubt, is that the family circle in which Tolstóy lived was an affectionate one, and he himself not only enjoyed his life but formed friendships and made efforts to which in later years he looked back with satisfaction. Yet there was assuredly much in his life and in the life around him which (except when others were severe on it) he recalled with grave disapproval, a disapproval plainly expressed in his *Confession*.

To come as near as we may to the truth we must allow for the personal element which in Tolstóy's case was violent and fluctuating.

With constant amusements going on around him it is not surprising that at the end of his first University year he failed in his examinations. The failure does not however appear to have been entirely his fault, for he tells us:

Ivanóv, Professor of Russian History, prevented me from passing to the second course (though I had not missed a single lecture and knew Russian History quite well) because he had quarrelled with my family. The same Professor also gave me the lowest mark—a 'one'—for German, though I knew the language incomparably better than any student in our division.

Instead of remaining for a second year in the first course of Oriental Languages, Tolstóy preferred to leave that faculty, and in August 1845 he entered the faculty of Law. During the first months of this new course he hardly studied at all, throwing himself more than ever into the gay life of Kazán society. Before midwinter however he began, for the first time as he tells us, 'to study seriously, and I even found a certain pleasure in so doing'. Comparative Jurisprudence and Criminal Law interested him, and his attention was especially arrested by a discussion on Capital Punishment. Meyer, Professor of Civil Law, set him a task which quite absorbed him; it was the comparison of Montesquieu's *Esprit des Lois* with Catherine II's *Great Nakáz*. The conclusion to which he came was that in Catherine's *Nakáz* Montesquieu's Liberal ideas are

found mixed with an expression of Catherine's own despotism and vanity, and that the *Nakáz* brought more fame to Catherine than good to Russia.

Of this study Tolstóy remarked to his German biographer that it was perhaps the chief cause of his leaving the University prematurely. He felt little interest in the subjects the Professors lectured on. It was his way to devote himself ardently to whatever he took up, and he read innumerable books, but always at any one time in one and the same direction. When a subject interested him he turned neither to the right nor to the left but tried to acquaint himself with all that could throw light on it. So it was at Kazán, and he found the University curriculum an obstacle to mastering the matters that occupied his mind.

He passed his examinations successfully in May 1846, and was duly admitted to the second year's course of Jurisprudence. Some time previously he and another student had disputed which of them had the better memory, and to test this each of them learnt by heart the reply to one examination question in History. Tolstóy's task was to learn the life of Mazéppa, and as luck would have it that was the very question he happened to draw at his examination, so that he naturally obtained a 5, the highest mark.

From the autumn of 1846 the brothers ceased to live at their aunt's and settled in a flat of their own, consisting of five rooms.

A fellow-student, Nazárev, has given us his impression of Tolstóy as a student. He says:

I kept clear of the Count, who from our first meeting repelled me by his assumption of coldness, his bristly hair, and the piercing expression of his half-closed eyes. I had never met a young man with such a strange, and to me incomprehensible, air of importance and self-satisfaction. . . .

At first I seldom met the Count, who in spite of his awkwardness and bashfulness had joined the small group of so-called 'aristocrats'. He hardly replied to my greetings, as if wishing to intimate that even here we were far from being

equals, since he drove up with a fast trotter and I came on foot. . . .

One gathers that Tolstóy was in those days particularly careful of his personal appearance, his clothes indicating his aristocratic pretensions. But though externally the Tolstóy of 1846 differed greatly from the Tolstóy of forty years later, his conversation ran on much the same lines as in later life, and was uttered with the intensity of conviction and the flashes of dry humour which later on made even the most didactic of his writings so readable.

It so happened that Nazárev and Tolstóy were both late for a lecture on History one day, and were incarcerated together by order of the Inspector, that being a usual punishment for such unpunctuality. Their conversation in their place of confinement having led to some mention of Lérmontov's poem, *The Demon*, Tolstóy took occasion to speak ironically of verse generally, and then, noticing a volume his companion had of Karamzín's *History of Russia*, he

attacked History as the dullest and almost the most useless of subjects. A collection of fables and useless details, sprinkled with a mass of unnecessary figures and proper names. . . . Who wants to know that the second marriage of John the Terrible, with Temrúk's daughter, took place on 21st August 1562; and his fourth marriage, with Anna Alexéevna Koltórskaia, in 1572? Yet they expect me to grind all this, and if I don't, the examiner gives me a 'one'.

Later on, says Nazárev,

the, to me, irresistible force of Tolstóy's doubts fell upon the University and on University teaching in general. The phrase 'The Temple of Science' was constantly on his lips. Remaining perfectly serious himself, he portrayed our professors in such a comical light that in spite of all my efforts to appear indifferent I laughed like one possessed. . . . 'Yet,' said Tolstóy, 'we both had a right to expect that we should leave this temple useful men, equipped with knowledge. But what shall we really carry away from the University? . . . What shall we be good for, and to whom shall we be necessary?'

Nazárev says that in spite of the feeling, half of dislike,

half of perplexity, that Tolstóy evoked in him, he well remembers that he was dimly conscious of something remarkable, exceptional, and at the same time inexplicable, about him.

From the educational articles Tolstóy wrote sixteen years later we know that he disapproved of examinations, of the restricted groove of studies marked out for the students in each faculty, and of the system which made it necessary for the professors to deliver original lectures of their own and obliged the students to listen to those lectures and study them however incompetent the professors might be.

During his second year in the Faculty of Law Tolstóy attended lectures very irregularly and received bad marks for 'diligence' from the professors generally at the half-yearly examination.

The fact that his brother Sergéy had finished his studies and was leaving, strengthened Tolstóy's dissatisfaction with the University. It also happened just at this time that the division of the family estates between the brothers and their sister was settled, and Leo inherited Yásnaya Polyána with four other estates, about 5,400 acres of land and 330 male peasants besides their women-folk. A sense of responsibility for their welfare attracted him to Yásnaya Polyána, and finally, without waiting for the May examinations, we find him, soon after Easter 1847, applying to have his name removed from the University roll 'on account of ill health and family affairs'. He really had been in hospital in March, but the plea of ill health was a mere excuse.

His failure to take a degree was a source of great annoyance and disappointment to him, and it must not be supposed that he left Kazán with any idea of taking life easily or neglecting further study.

Tolstóy kept a private Diary during the greater part of his life, and the first volume that has been preserved begins on 17th March 1847, when he was in hospital at Kazán. On its first page he notes that he is entirely alone, and adds:

The chief advantage is that I have come to see clearly that the irregular life which the majority of fashionable people suppose to be an outcome of youth is really an outcome of early spiritual depravity. A man living in society finds solitude as beneficial as one not living in society finds social intercourse. . . . It is easier to write ten volumes of philosophy than to put a single precept into practice.

A month later he notes:

Of late I have failed to conduct myself as I should wish; of which the cause has been, first, my removal from hospital, and secondly, the company in which I am beginning increasingly to move. . . .

I find myself confronted by the question: 'What is the aim of man's life?' and . . . I invariably arrive at the conclusion that the purpose of our human existence is to afford a maximum of help towards the completest development of everything that exists.

Here he had propounded a question that always seemed to him supremely important, but to which he found quite a different answer in later years. On the same day he writes:

I should be the unhappiest of men if I could not find a purpose for my life—a purpose both general and useful. . . . So now my whole life will be an active and constant striving towards that single aim.

Here are some rules he set himself at that time:

1. To fulfil what I set myself, despite all obstacles.
2. To fulfil well what I undertake.
3. Never to refer to a book for what I have forgotten, but always to try to recall it to mind myself.
4. Always to make my mind work with its utmost power.
5. Always to read and think aloud.
6. Not to be ashamed of telling people who interrupt me that they are hindering me: letting them first feel it, but (if they do not understand) telling them, with an apology.

Deciding to settle at Yásnaya for two years, he drew up a list of studies he intended to pursue for his own mental development and to qualify for a University

degree; and this list was, as the reader will see, appalling in its scope.

1. To study the whole course of law necessary to get my degree.
2. To study practical medicine, and to some extent its theory also.
3. To study: French, Russian, German, English, Italian, and Latin.
4. To study agriculture, theoretically and practically.
5. To study History, Geography, and Statistics.
6. To study Mathematics (the High School course).
7. To write my [University] thesis.
8. To reach the highest perfection I can in music and painting.
9. To write down rules (for my conduct).
10. To acquire some knowledge of the natural sciences, and
11. To write essays on all the subjects I study.

Such rules and resolutions abound in Tolstóy's Diary. After failing to act up to them, he again and again gathers his energies and maps out for himself plans of life and courses of study sufficient to tax the energies of an intellectual giant.

During the last year of his life at Kazán he made close friends with a student named Dyákov (the Dmítri of *Boyhood*), and under his influence had developed

an ecstatic worship of the ideal of virtue, and the conviction that it is man's destiny continually to perfect himself. To put all mankind right and to destroy all human vices and misfortunes appeared a matter that could well be accomplished. It seemed quite easy and simple to put oneself right, to acquire all the virtues, and to be happy.

As to his religious opinions at this time, he tells us that having believed in the doctrines of his Church as a boy and confessed and taken Communion devoutly, by the time he was fourteen:

I began to reflect on life in general and came up against religion which did not coincide with my theories, and of course I considered it a good thing to get rid of it.

(Letter to his Aunt, Alexándra Tolstóy, in 1859.)

I was baptized and brought up in the Orthodox Christian faith. I was taught it in childhood and all through my boyhood and youth. But when I left the University in my second year, at the age of eighteen, I no longer believed anything I had been taught. (*Confession.*)

His Diary nevertheless shows that he prayed frequently and earnestly; the fact no doubt being, that though intellectually he discarded the Orthodox Russo-Greek Church, in times of trouble or distress he instinctively appealed to God for help. His opinions were wavering and immature, as he himself tells us in another passage:

The religious beliefs taught me in childhood disappeared . . . and as from the age of fifteen I began to read philosophical works, my rejection of those beliefs became a conscious one at a very early age. From the time I was sixteen I ceased to go to Church or to fast of my own volition. I did not believe what had been taught me in childhood, but I believed in something. What it was I believed in I could not at all have said. I believed in a God, or rather I did not deny God; but I could not have said what sort of God. Neither did I deny Christ and his teaching, but what his teaching consisted in I again could not have said.

Looking back on that time I now see clearly that my faith—my only real faith, that which apart from my animal instincts gave impulse to my life—was a belief in perfecting myself. But in what this perfecting consisted and what its object was, I could not have said. I tried to perfect myself mentally—I studied everything I could, anything life threw in my way; I tried to perfect my will, I drew up rules which I tried to follow; I perfected myself physically, cultivating my strength and agility by all sorts of exercises and accustoming myself to endurance and patience by all kinds of privations. And all this I considered to be the pursuit of perfection. The beginning of it all was of course moral perfection; but that was soon replaced by perfection in general: by the desire to be better not in my own eyes or those of God, but in the eyes of other people. And very soon this effort again changed into a desire to be stronger than others: to be more famous, more important and richer than others. (*Confession.*)

At one time his special desire was to become the strongest man in the world, and he devoted himself

ardently to gymnastics for a number of years. His muscular strength and dexterity remained remarkable till he was well advanced in years, and visitors at Yásnaya Polyána long after his marriage were often amazed at his agility.

In an early draft of his *Confession* the following passage occurs:

I remember that on the day of my first examination at the University, walking near the Black Lake I prayed God to enable me to pass the examination, and while learning the words of the Catechism I saw clearly that the whole Catechism was false.

That relates to 29th May 1844.

When speaking of Tolstóy's relations with women, it should be borne in mind that incontinence for young men was considered so natural that few in his position would have felt any serious qualms of conscience about such visits to houses of ill-fame as he lets us know that he began to pay at this time. His brother Dmíttri, however, led a chaste life, and alternating with gross lapses of conduct we find Leo noting down for his own guidance such resolutions as the following:

To regard the society of women as an inevitable evil of social life and to avoid it as much as possible. From whom indeed do we learn sensuality, effeminacy, frivolity in everything, and many other vices, if not from women? Whose fault is it, if not women's, that we lose our innate qualities of boldness, resolution, reasonableness, justice, &c.? Women are more receptive than men, therefore in virtuous ages women were better than we; but in the present depraved and vicious age they are worse than we are.

During his years at the University Tolstóy saw much of his brother Dmíttri, of whom he says:

I remember also that when my elder brother Dmíttri, who was then at the University, suddenly in the passionate way natural to him devoted himself to religion and began to attend all the Church services, to fast, and to lead a pure and moral life, we all—even our elders—unceasingly held him up

to ridicule and called him, for some unknown reason, 'Noah'. I remember that Músin-Púshkin, the then Curator of Kazán University, when inviting us to a dance at his house ironically persuaded my brother (who had declined the invitation) by using the argument that even David danced before the Ark. I sympathized with these jokes made by my elders, and drew from them the conclusion that though it is necessary to learn the catechism and go to church one must not take such things too seriously. (*Confession.*)

Again we read of this brother:

His peculiarities became manifest and are impressed on my mind from the time of our life at Kazán. Formerly in Moscow I remember that he did not fall in love, as Serëzha and I did, and was not fond of dancing or of military pageants, but studied well and strenuously. . . . At Kazán I, who had always imitated Serëzha, began to grow depraved. . . . Not only at Kazán but even earlier I used to take pains about my appearance. I tried to be elegant and *comme il faut*. There was no trace of anything of that kind in Mitenka. I think he never suffered from the usual vices of youth; he was always serious, thoughtful, pure, and resolute, though hot-tempered, and whatever he did he did to the best of his ability. . . . He wrote verse with great facility. I remember how admirably he translated Schiller's *Der Jüngling am Bache*, but he did not devote himself to this occupation. . . . He grew up associating little with others, always except in moments of anger, quiet and serious. He was tall, rather thin, and not very strong, with long, large hands and round shoulders. I do not know how or by what he was attracted at so early an age towards a religious life, but it began in the very first year of his University career. His religious aspirations naturally directed him to Church life, and he devoted himself to this with his usual thoroughness.

In Mitenka there must have existed that valuable characteristic which I believe my mother to have had and which I knew in Nikólenka, but of which I was altogether devoid—complete indifference to other people's opinion about oneself. Until quite lately (in old age) I have never been able to divest myself of concern about people's opinion, but Mitenka was quite free from this. I never remembered on his face that restrained smile which involuntarily appears when one is being praised. I always remember his serious, quiet, sad, sometimes severe, almond-shaped hazel eyes. Only in our

Kazán days did we begin to pay particular attention to him, and then merely because while Serëzha and I attached great importance to what was *comme il faut*—to externalities—he was careless and untidy and we condemned him for this.

We others, especially Serëzha, kept up acquaintance with our aristocratic comrades and other young men. Mítenka on the contrary selected out of all the students a piteous-looking, poor, shabbily dressed youth, Poluboyárinov [which may be translated half-noble]—whom a humorous fellow-student of ours called Polubezobédov [half-dinnerless]—and consorted only with him, and with him prepared for the examinations. . . . We brothers, and even our aunt, looked down on Mítenka with a certain contempt for his low tastes and associates; and the same attitude was adopted by our frivolous comrades.

After their University days were over Tolstóy saw little of his brother Dmítri; so it will be convenient here to sacrifice chronological sequence and relate what more there is to tell of the latter's life and death. The material is again supplied by Tolstóy's *Reminiscences*.

When we divided up the family property, Yásnaya Polyána, the estate where we lived, was, according to custom, given to me (the youngest). Serëzha, as a lover of horses and according to his wish, received Pirogóvo, where there was a stud. To Mítenka and Nikólenka were given the two other estates: to Nikólenka, Nikólskoe, to Mítenka, the Kursk estate, Sherbachóvka. I have kept a note of Mítenka's showing how he regarded the possession of serfs. The idea that it is wrong, and that serfs ought to be liberated, was quite unknown in our circle in the forties. The hereditary possession of serfs seemed a necessary condition of life, and all that could be done to prevent its being an evil was to attend not only to their material but also to their moral welfare. In this sense Mítenka wrote very seriously, naively, and sincerely. Thinking he could not do otherwise, he, a lad of twenty, when he left the University took it upon himself to direct the morality of hundreds of peasant families, and to do this (as Gógol recommended in his *Letters to a Landowner*) by threats of punishments and by punishments. . . . But besides this duty to his serfs there was another duty which at that time it seemed impossible not to fulfil: namely, Military or Civil service. And Mítenka decided to enter the Civil Service.

Tolstóy proceeds to tell how his brother, desiring to be useful to his country, chose legislation as his speciality, and going to Petersburg astonished the Head of the Department as well as certain aristocratic acquaintances by asking where he could find a place in which he could be *useful*. The friend to whom he went for advice regarded the service of the State merely as a means of satisfying ambition, and 'such a question had probably never occurred to him before'. Eventually we find Dmítri returning home discouraged, and taking up some local work. All this to some extent helps us to understand Leo Tolstóy's sceptical attitude towards the institution of Government, and his strong belief that men in Government service are solely actuated by selfish motives.

Tolstóy continues:

After we had both left the University I lost sight of him. I know he lived the same severe, abstemious life, knowing neither wine, tobacco, nor above all women, till he was twenty-six, which was very rare in those days. I know also that he associated with monks and pilgrims. . . . I think I was already in the Caucasus when an extraordinary change took place. He suddenly took to drinking, smoking, wasting money, and going with women. How it happened I do not know; I did not see him at the time. I only know that his seducer was a thoroughly immoral man of very attractive appearance, the youngest son of Islénev [an uncle of the lady Leo Tolstóy subsequently married].

In this life Mítenka remained the same serious religious man he was in everything. He ransomed from the brothel a prostitute named Másha, who was the first woman he knew, and took her into his house. But this life did not last long. I believe it was less the vicious and unhealthy life he led for some months in Moscow than his mental struggle and his qualms of conscience that suddenly destroyed his powerful organism. He became consumptive, went to the country, was doctored in the provincial town, and took to his bed in Orël where I saw him for the last time just after the Crimean war. He was in a dreadful state of emaciation: one could even see how his enormous hand joined on to the two bones of his lower arm; his face was all eyes, and they were still the same beautiful serious eyes with a penetrating expression of inquiry

in them. He was constantly coughing and spitting, but was loth to die and reluctant to believe he was dying. Poor pock-marked Másha, whom he had rescued, was with him and nursed him. In my presence, at his own wish, a wonder-working icon was brought. I remember the expression of his face when he prayed to it. . . . He died a few days later.

Readers of the didactic works of Tolstóy's later years will notice how closely his injunctions to a man to keep to the first woman, whoever she may be, with whom he has had intimate relations, correspond with the course actually followed by his brother Dmítri.

When Tolstóy left the University, however, these things were still unthought of. Let us, before returning to the events of his own life at that time, notice some books which he read between the ages of fourteen and twenty-one. They included:

The Sermon on the Mount from St. Matthew's Gospel.
Rousseau's *Confessions* and *Émile*,
Dickens's *David Copperfield*,
Gogol's *Vii*,

which all had an 'immense' influence on him.

In another category came works which he says had 'very great' influence. These were:

Rousseau's *Nouvelle Héloïse*.
Sterne's *Sentimental Journey*.
Púshkin's *Eugéni Onégin*.
Schiller's *The Robbers*.
Gógol's *Dead Souls*.
Turgénev's *A Sportsman's Notebook*.
Druzhínin's *Pólenka Sax*.

Grigoróvich's *Antón Gormeyka*, and the chapter *Tamár* from Lérmontov's *A Hero of Our Times*.

In a third category he mentions some of Gógol's Shorter Stories and Prescott's *Conquest of Mexico*, as having had 'great' influence. .

In these works one finds many ideas which have been congenial to Tolstóy throughout his life and his adherence to which only became firmer with age. In illustration of this, take a couple of passages from Dickens which

many readers may have passed without much attention, but which to Tolstóy represented the absolute truth of the matters they touch on. David Copperfield says of Parliament:

I considered myself reasonably entitled to escape from the dreary debates. One joyful night, therefore, I noted down the music of the parliamentary bagpipes for the last time, and I have never heard it since; though I still recognize the old drone in the newspapers without any substantial variation (except, perhaps, that there is more of it) all the livelong session.

To most Englishmen with memories of Pym and Hampden, or personal knowledge of the lives of men who have devoted themselves disinterestedly to public affairs, parliamentary or local, Dickens's sneers at Parliament as 'the national dust-yard', and his account of the Eatanswill election in *The Pickwick Papers*, seem merely humorous; but to Tolstóy, with his inherited dislike of government, this testimony from a great English writer who had served as a parliamentary reporter, seemed irrefutable evidence of the futility of parliaments. This, I think, was of importance later on, when Tolstóy's outlook on life led him to condemn governments in general, for it predisposed him to extend that condemnation to parliamentary as well as to autocratic government and to refuse any support to the Cadet Party which tried in the Dúma to introduce responsible parliamentary government; an attempt which, had it succeeded, might have averted the Bolshévik revolution—which both by its methods and its results would have horrified Tolstóy.

Take, again, a passage in which Dickens hits a nail adroitly on the head:

Mr. Micawber had a relish in this formal piling up of words, which, however ludicrously displayed in his case, was, I must say, not at all peculiar to him. I have observed it, in the course of my life, in numbers of men. It seems to me to be a general rule. In the taking of legal oaths, for instance, deponents seem to enjoy themselves mightily when they come to several grand words in succession, for the expression of one

idea—as, that they utterly detest, abominate, and abjure, and so forth—and the old anathemas were made relishing on the same principle. We talk about the tyranny of words, but we like to tyrannize over them too. We are fond of having a large superfluous establishment of words to wait upon us on great occasions; we think it looks important, and sounds well. As we are not particular about the meaning of our liveries on State occasions, if they be but fine and numerous enough, so the meaning or necessity of our words is a secondary consideration, if there be but a great parade of them.

No modern writer has ever more carefully eschewed the practice Dickens here attacks than Tolstóy did throughout his career. Indeed, he is far stricter than Dickens himself in this respect.

But much more important than the influence of Dickens was that of Rousseau, of whom Tolstóy once remarked:

I have read the whole of Rousseau—all his twenty volumes, including his *Dictionary of Music*. I was more than enthusiastic about him, I worshipped him. At the age of fifteen I wore a medallion portrait of him next my body instead of the Orthodox cross. Many of his pages are so akin to me that it seems to me that I must have written them myself.

Another writer who influenced Tolstóy, though to a much smaller extent, was Voltaire, of whom he says:

I also remember that I read Voltaire when I was very young, and his ridicule [of religion] not only did not shock me, but amused me very much.

Everything Tolstóy did in his life he did with intensity; and that this applies to the way in which he read books in his youth, is shown by the fact that we find him in *What is Art?* written when he was seventy, according the highest praise to books he had read before he was twenty-one, or even before he was fourteen.

It was in the spring of 1847 that Tolstóy, who was not yet nineteen, returned to his estate of Yásnaya Polyána, to live with his dear 'Auntie' Tatiána; to 'perfect' himself, to study, to manage his estate, and to improve

the condition of his serfs. The last part of this programme at any rate, was not at that time destined to have much success. Though one must never treat Tolstóy's fiction as strictly autobiographical, yet *A Landlord's Morning* gives a very fair idea of his own efforts to improve the lot of his serfs and of the difficulties and failures he encountered in the course of that attempt. In that story Prince Nekhlyúdob decides to leave the University and settle in the country, and writes to his aunt:

As I already wrote you I found affairs in indescribable disorder. Wishing to put them right I discovered that the chief evil is the truly pitiable, wretched condition of the serfs, and this is an evil that can only be remedied by work and patience. If you could but see two of my serfs, David and Iván, and the life they and their families lead, I am sure the sight of these two poor wretches would convince you more than all I can say in explanation of my intention.

Is it not my plain and sacred duty to care for the welfare of these seven hundred souls for whom I must account to God? Will it not be a sin if following plans of pleasure or ambition, I abandon them to the caprice of coarse Elders and stewards? And why should I seek in any other sphere opportunities of being useful and doing good, when I have before me such a noble, brilliant, and intimate duty?

Not only is this letter just such as Tolstóy himself may have written, but the difficulties Nekhlyúdob encounters when he tries to move his peasants from the ruts to which generations of serfdom had accustomed them are just those Tolstóy himself met with: the suspicion shown by the serfs towards any fresh interference on the part of the master, and the fact that ways to which a community have grown accustomed are not easily changed by the sudden effort of a well-intentioned but inexperienced proprietor. Serfdom was so unsatisfactory a condition, the physical, mental, and moral needs of the serfs were so urgent, Tolstóy's efforts to improve their condition produced such poor results, and the serfs were so intractable, that far from his exertions yielding him moral satisfaction, they only produced 'a mixed feeling of

weariness, shame, impotence, and regret', as readers of *A Landlord's Morning* may well understand.

After spending two summers at Yásnaya, Tolstóy went to Moscow in October 1848 and passed that winter idly amusing himself in Moscow society, to which he had ready access. Early in 1849 he went to Petersburg where he entered for examination at the University of that city.

On 13th February he wrote to his brother Sergéy:

I write you this letter from Petersburg, where I intend to remain *for ever*. . . . I have decided to stay here for my
1849 examinations and then to enter the service. . . .

In brief, I must say that Petersburg life has a great and good influence on me: it accustoms me to activity and supplies the place of a fixed table of occupations. Somehow one cannot be idle; every one is occupied and active; one cannot find a man with whom one could lead an aimless life and one can't do it alone. . . .

I know you will not believe that I have changed, but will say, 'It's already the twentieth time and nothing comes of you—the emptiest of fellows'. No, I have now altered in quite a new way. I used to say to myself: 'Now I will change', but at last I see that I have changed, and I say, 'I have changed'.

Above all, I am now quite convinced that one cannot live by theorizing and philosophizing, but must live positively, i.e. must be a practical man. That is a great step in advance and a great change; it never happened to me before. If one is young and wishes to live, there is no place in Russia but Petersburg for it. . . .

On 1st May he wrote again to his brother, in a very different strain:

Serëzha! I think you already say I am 'the emptiest of fellows', and it is true. God knows what I have done! I came to Petersburg without any reason and have done nothing useful here, but have spent heaps of money and got into debt. Stupid! Insufferably stupid! You can't believe how it torments me. Above all, the *debts*, which I *must* pay *as soon as possible*, because if I don't pay them soon, besides losing the money I shall lose my reputation. . . . I know you will cry out; but what's to be done? One commits such folly once in a lifetime. I have had to pay for my freedom (there was no one to thrash me, that was my chief misfortune) and for

philosophizing, and now I have paid for it. Be so kind as to arrange to get me out of this false and horrid position—penniless and in debt all round.

He goes on to mention that he had passed two examinations at the University, but that he had altered his mind, and now instead of completing his examinations wanted to 'enter the Horse Guards as a Cadet'. (A Cadet was a young man who volunteered for the army. Before receiving a commission a Cadet lived with the officers, while preparing to become one of them.)

God willing, I will amend and become a steady man at last. I hope much from my service as a Cadet, which will train me to practical life, and *nolens-volens* I shall have to earn the rank of officer. With luck, i.e. if the Guards go into action, I may get a commission even before the usual two years are up. The Guards start for the front at the end of May. At present I can do nothing: first, because I have no money (of which I shall not need much, I fancy), and secondly, because my two birth-certificates are at Yásnaya. Have them sent on as soon as possible.

Before long, Tolstóy was again writing to his brother:

In my last letter I wrote much nonsense, of which the chief item was that I intended to enter the Horse Guards; I shall act on that plan only in case I fail in my examinations and if the war is a serious one.

The war in question was Russia's share in quelling the Hungarian rebellion. Not a thought of the justice of the cause seems at that time to have crossed the mind of the man who in later life became so powerful an indicter of war.

This is Tolstóy's own summary, written many years later, of the period we are now dealing with:

It was very pleasant living in the country with Auntie Tatiána, but an indefinite thirst for knowledge drew me away to a distance. This was in 1848, and I was still uncertain what to undertake. In Petersburg two roads were open to me. I could either enter the army, to take part in the Hungarian campaign, or I could complete my studies at the University

to enter the Civil Service. My thirst for knowledge conquered my ambition, and I again began to study. I even passed two examinations in Law, but then all my good resolutions broke down. Spring came, and the charm of country life again drew me back to my estate.

Of the two examinations he passed that April he says:

In 1848 I went to pass the examinations for my degree at Petersburg University, knowing literally nothing, and reading up only for a week or two. I worked day and night; and passed with Honours in Civil and Criminal Law after giving only one week to each subject.

But in spite of this success he did not take the remaining examinations, and returned to Yásnaya without having obtained a degree—finally abandoning the attempt to do so.

In later times when Tolstóy's reputation was world-wide, critics often amused themselves by detecting inconsistencies in his conduct and questioning his sincerity. But the proof of his sincerity is writ large in the story of his life. Time after time, from the earliest pages of his Diary, we find him vehemently resolving never more to do certain things but always to do other things, and again and again confessing in the greatest distress that he had failed to carry out his intentions; yet in spite of everything he returns, and again returns, to his earliest ideals, and gradually shaping his life into accord with them, eventually forms habits which when he first extolled them appeared utterly beyond his reach. Not insincerity, but impetuosity retrieved by extraordinary tenacity of purpose, characterized him. It was the same with his thirst for knowledge as with his yet deeper thirst after righteousness. Often as he was swayed by the lures of life, each of those two great desires found its satisfaction at last.

The letters quoted above show some consciousness of the fact that there is a practical side to life not to be mastered by theorizing; but the duty of learning by

experience as well as by ratiocination is one Tolstóy seldom dwelt on, and never, I think, realized at all fully.

Another characteristic matter alluded to in these letters is the difficulty he found himself in for lack of his birth-certificates and other papers. Russia had long suffered from a superabundance of red tape which contrasted strongly with the slipshod habits of its people and promoted the hatred of officialism which is still so general there. The fact that Tolstóy was on several occasions put to great inconvenience for lack of certificates which it was not in his nature methodically to keep in readiness, seems a small matter, but it probably had its share in increasing his dislike of governments.

From Petersburg he brought back with him to Yásnaya a gifted but drunken German musician named Rudolph, with whom he chanced to make acquaintance and whose talent he discerned. For some time Tolstóy devoted himself passionately to music, acquiring sufficient skill to become an excellent and sympathetic accompanist on the piano, and at one time he even apparently thought of becoming a professional musician. He was always most susceptible to the influence of music, and in music as in literature had strong sympathies and antipathies. Rudolph supplies the principal figure in his story *Albert*, written some years later.

Aunt Tatiána, who had played the piano excellently in youth but had quite given it up for nearly thirty years, and who was now fifty-three years of age, resumed its practice and, Tolstóy tells us, played duets with him and often surprised him by the accuracy and beauty of her execution.

Tolstóy's life is full of events in which he played a public part, and these necessarily so overshadow his private recreations, that there will be but scant opportunity to dwell on the influence music had on him from his youth to his old age. Suffice it to say that besides Weber (especially his Sonata in A flat major), Mozart, Haydn, Schubert, Schumann, Bach, Chopin, Beethoven's earlier works, and Wieniawski, Tolstóy was particularly

partial to Russian folk songs, such as *Down along our Mother Volga*, to Cossack and soldier songs, and to those that used to be sung by the Gipsy choirs. He maintained that Gipsy singing was sincere and infected the hearers, so that it was true art, even though it might be art of an inferior order.

Readers who want to know more about Tolstóy's likes and dislikes in music are referred to the very thorough treatment of it by his eldest son, Count Sergéy Tolstóy, in his article on 'Music in Tolstóy's Life'.¹

For the next three years Tolstóy lived partly at Yásnaya and partly in Túla and in Moscow, and led a life alternating between the asceticism of his brother Dmítri and the self-indulgence of his brother Sergéy, giving way to dissipation, hunting, gipsy-girl singers, and, he tells us, 'above all to cards: I lost heavily and deranged my affairs'—which, indeed, became seriously involved. But even here we find him, in the summer of 1850, resuming his Diary with penitence and self-reproach and drawing up a time-table of how his days are in future to be spent: estate-management, bathing, diary-writing, music, dinner, rest, reading, bathing, and again estate-business to close the day. This curriculum was, however, neglected. Gusts of passion often swept away his good resolutions.

At this time he made his first attempt to start a school for the peasant children of Yásnaya, but it was 1849 closed again two years later when he was in pecuniary difficulties; and it was not till 1862 that he discovered that he had infringed the law by opening it without official permission.

In relation to women Tolstóy's ideal was a regular and affectionate family life. Women were for him divided into two groups: those sacred ones who could be looked on as possible wives or sisters, and those who could be paid for and possessed for short periods. His animal passions were very strong, and late in life he

¹ See *Family Views of Tolstóy* (Allen and Unwin, 1926).

told me that neither drinking, cards, smoking, nor any other bad habit, had been nearly so hard for him to overcome as his desire for women. But he never doubted that that desire was a bad one. To judge him fairly it must be remembered how loose was the general tone of the society in which he lived, and that the advice given him at this critical time of his life by those who were his natural guides was not that he should live a chaste life, but that he should attach himself to a woman of good social position. In his *Confession* he tells us:

The kind aunt with whom I lived, herself the purest of beings, always told me that there was nothing she so desired for me as that I should have relations with a married woman: *Rien ne forme un jeune homme, comme une liaison avec une femme comme il faut* [Nothing so forms a young man as an intimacy with a woman of good breeding]. Another happiness she desired for me was that I should become an aide-de-camp, and if possible aide-de-camp to the Emperor. But the greatest happiness of all would be that I should marry a very rich girl and become possessed of as many serfs as possible.

We never find Tolstóy involved in any family scandal or called on to fight a duel about women; but his Diary at this period contains many traces of his struggles and his falls, as when, calling in his pride as an aid to his conscience, he writes:

Men whom I consider morally lower than myself do evil better than I. . . . I live an animal life, though not quite debauched. My occupations are almost abandoned and I am greatly depressed in spirit.

His pecuniary affairs having become disordered owing to his gambling habits, towards the end of 1850 he thought of trying to earn money by taking a contract to run the post-station at Túla, which before railways were built was an undertaking of some importance. Varied, however, as Tolstóy's abilities unquestionably were, Nature never intended him for a man of business, and this plan fortunately came to nothing.

The winter of 1850-51 he passed for the most part in

Moscow, and as a foretaste of the simplification of life which was to be such a prominent feature of his 1850-51 later years, we find him writing to his aunt at Yásnaya: *Je dîne à la maison avec des stchi et kasha dont je me contente parfaitement* [I dine at home on cabbage soup and buckwheat porridge, with which I am quite contented]; and he goes on to say that he only awaits the preserves and home-made liqueurs [which she no doubt sent him] to have everything as he was accustomed to have it in the country.

We find Auntie Tatiána warning him against card-playing. Tolstóy replies in French:

All that you say about the perversity of play is very true, and I often think about it, and that is why I believe that I shall gamble no more. . . . 'I believe,' but I hope soon to tell you for certain.

In March 1851 he returned to Moscow after visiting Yásnaya, and he notes in his Diary that he went there with the treble aim of playing cards, getting married, and entering the Civil Service. Not one of these three objects was attained. He took an aversion to cards. For marriage he considered a conjunction of love, reason, and fate, to be necessary, and none of these was present. As to entering the service, it was again the fact that he had not brought the necessary documents with him that barred the way.

In March he writes to Auntie Tatiána, and says he believes it to be true that spring brings a moral renovation. It always does him good, and he is able to maintain his good intentions for some months. Winter is the season that causes him to go wrong. Happening to read a Life of Benjamin Franklin, and borrowing an idea from him, Tolstóy, besides his Diary, started a 'Franklin Journal', in which was a tabulated list of the virtues and qualities he aimed at acquiring with ruled spaces for each day of the week, in which spaces he marked with a cross day by day those against which he had transgressed.

Next came a period of religious humility: he fasted

diligently and composed a sermon, which of course was never preached. He also tried unsuccessfully to write a gipsy story and an imitation of Sterne's *Sentimental Journey*. He even at this time began the early drafts of what eventually, after several revisions, became his first published work, *Childhood*; and the astonishing thing is that, as a recently published fragment entitled *The Story of Yesterday* shows, from the very first he showed himself master of a new style of fiction destined to play a great role in subsequent literature, and to which reference must be made in a later chapter.

This period of his life was brought to a close by the return from the Caucasus, on leave of absence, of his eldest brother Nicholas, who was by this time an artillery officer.

Anxious to economize and pay off debts contracted at cards, especially one of 4,000 rubles to Ogarón, a gendarme officer who owned a small estate near Yásnaya, Leo resolved to accompany his brother on the latter's return to the Caucasus, and this he did at the end of April 1851. He entrusted his estate to the care of his brother-in-law (Márya's husband), who was to pay his debts and allow him only 500 rubles (then equal to about £80) a year to live on, and he gave his word not to play cards any more.

Tolstóy had another reason, to which allusion has already been made, for wishing to escape from his accustomed surroundings. His brother Sergéy was very fond of the gipsy choirs, famous in Russia for their musical talent. These choirs used to visit Yásnaya, and Leo Tolstóy, who shared his brother's susceptibility to the fascinations of the gipsy girls, saw a means of safety in flight to the Caucasus.

Before closing this chapter let us note the extraordinary freedom enjoyed by young men of Tolstóy's class in those days of serfdom. Economically, serfdom supplied them with means, at the expense of a class deprived of almost all rights and absolutely dependent on their owners. Even if a member of the aristocracy

ruined himself, family interest or a prudent marriage often retrieved the position for him. Religious restraint counted for little, for side by side with superstition, scepticism was common among the educated. The standard of morals expected of a young man was elastic and ill-defined. No irksome sense of public duty pressed on his attention. Politics, in our sense of the word, were forbidden; and though he had to enter the State service (civil or military), this was regarded either as a way of making a career for himself or as a mere formality.

The detachment from the real business of life in which young Russians grew up and the comparative isolation in which they lived on their country estates, explain the extremely radical conclusions often arrived at by those of them who wished to make the world better. Chain a man to the heavily laden car of social progress and he can only advance very slowly, though any advance he does accomplish represents much effort and is of practical importance. Detach him from that car and he may easily and pleasantly fly away on the wings of speculation to the uttermost realms of the highest heaven without its producing any perceptible result on the lives of his fellow men. I mean, that the less a man is involved in practical work the easier and pleasanter it is for him to take up extreme positions; I do not mean to deny that activity in the realm of thought and feeling exerts an unseen yet potent influence on other minds, and ultimately on practical affairs.

A knowledge of the social surroundings in which Tolstóy developed makes it easier to understand the doctrines he subsequently taught. It was partly because he grew up in a detached and irresponsible position that the state of his own mind and soul were to him so much more important than the immediate effect of his conduct on others, and the same cause led him to remain in ignorance of lessons every intelligent man of business among us learns of necessity.

His independent position made easier the formation of that state of mind, free from intellectual prejudice,

which enabled him later on to examine the claims of the Church, of the Bible, of the economists, of governments, and of the most firmly established manners and customs of society, untrammelled by fear of shocking or hurting other people, though all the time his feelings were so sensitive that it was never possible for him to doubt or question the goodness of lines of conduct he had admired and approved when in childhood he saw them practised by people near and dear to him.

Contrasting his moral attitude with that of a young Englishman anxious to do right in our day, I should say that Tolstóy had no adequate sense of being a responsible member of a complex community with the opinions and wishes of which it is necessary to reckon. On the contrary, his tendency was to recognize with extraordinary vividness a personal duty revealed by the working of his own conscience and intellect, apart from any systematic study of the social state of which he was a member.

He thus came to see things in a way we do not see them, while he remained blind to some things with which we are quite familiar. That is one reason why he is so extraordinarily interesting: he puts things in a way no Englishman would ever dream of putting them, and yet we feel how near akin we of the Western twentieth-century world are to this nineteenth-century Russian nobleman, who has so much in common with the medieval saint and the Oriental fatalist; and this helps us to realize that all nations and classes of men are indeed of one blood.

Later on, when we have to deal with Tolstóy's peaceful anarchism and his conviction that no external regulation of society is necessary, but that all men would naturally do right were they not hampered by man-made laws, it will be useful to bear in mind that his own strength grew through having to steer unaided through the stormy seas of passion, and from finding his own way to a haven the lights of which had first shone on him in childhood. Like the rest of mankind, he judged others by himself.

CHAPTER III

THE CAUCASUS

THE brothers Nicholas and Leo left Yásnaya Polyána on 20th April 1851, and spent a couple of weeks in Moscow. The frankness of Leo's intercourse with his Aunt Tatiána is illustrated by the following letter which he wrote telling her of a visit he paid to Sokólniki, a pleasant outskirt of Moscow on the borders of a pine forest, where a fête is held on May-day.

He wrote in French, for Tatiána, like many Russian ladies educated early in the nineteenth century, knew French better than she did Russian, but this is its translation.

I went to the fête at Sokólniki in detestable weather, which was why I did not meet any of the society ladies I wished to see. As you say I am a man who tests himself I went among the plebs in the gipsy tents. You can easily imagine the inward struggle I there experienced, for and against. However, I came out victorious: that is to say, I gave nothing but my blessing to the gay descendants of the illustrious Pharaohs. Nicholas considers me a very agreeable travelling companion, except for my cleanliness. He is cross because, he says, I change my linen twelve times a day. I also find him a very agreeable companion, except for his dirtiness. I do not know which of us is right.

On leaving Moscow, instead of travelling to the Caucasus by the usual route via Vorónesh, Nicholas Tolstóy, who liked to do things his own way, decided that they would drive first to Kazán. Here they stayed a week visiting their acquaintances, and that was long enough for Leo to fall in love with a young lady to whom his shyness prevented his expressing his sentiments. He left for the Caucasus bearing the secret with him, and it was not long before she married some one else.

From Kazán they drove to Sarátov where they hired

a boat large enough to take their travelling carriage on board, and with a crew of three men they made their way down the Vólga to Astrakhán, sometimes rowing, sometimes sailing, and sometimes drifting with the stream.

The scorn of luxury and social distinctions so prominent in Tolstóy's later philosophy was at this time more to the taste of his brother Nicholas. A gentleman drove past them in Kazán leaning on his walking-stick with ungloved hands, and that was sufficient to cause Leo to refer to him contemptuously, whereupon Nicholas, in his usual tone of good-natured irony, wanted to know why a man should be despised for not wearing gloves.

From Astrakhán they had still to drive some two hundred and seventy miles by post-chaise, but reached Starogládov, where Nicholas Tolstóy's battery was stationed, by the end of May. The whole journey from Moscow, including the stay in Kazán, had taken them nearly a month.

It will be convenient here to explain why the Russians were then fighting in the Caucasus.

After the conquest of the Tartar Khanates of Kazán and Astrakhán by Russia in the sixteenth century, the Tartar tribes were gradually pushed back to the south, until the Russians came in contact with the wild hill-tribes inhabiting the northern slopes of the Caucasian mountains. As an outpost against these tribes by the commencement of the nineteenth century a line of Cossack stations had been formed along the northern banks of the rivers Térek, flowing into the Caspian Sea, and of the Kubán, flowing into the Black Sea. Meanwhile Georgia, situated to the south of the Caucasian Mountains, had been voluntarily annexed to Russia in 1799, to escape Persian oppression; and it therefore became politically desirable for Russia to subdue the tribes that separated her from her newly acquired dependency. During the first half of the nineteenth century this task proceeded very slowly, but at the time we are dealing with, Prince Baryátinski, in command of

the Russian forces stationed on the northern bank of the Térék, was undertaking a series of expeditions against the native tribes. Till then the Russians had held hardly anything south of the Térék and north of the Causasian Mountains, except their own forts and encampments, and their greatest difficulty was in dealing with the warlike Chéchen tribe which occupied the wooded ravines on the south side of the Térék and the mountainous defiles of Ichkériya. Here Tolstóy was engaged during his army service in the Caucasus. What this warfare was like we learn from his stories *The Raid*, *The Cossacks*, *The Wood-Felling*, and *Meeting an Acquaintance in the Detachment*.¹ In less than another decade Baryátinski had captured Shámyl (the famous leader who so long defied Russia) and subdued the whole country.

Soon after the brothers Tolstóy arrived at Starogládov, Nicholas was ordered to Stáry-Yurt, the fortified camp at Goryachevódk (‘Hot Springs’), an advanced post recently established to protect invalids who availed themselves of those mineral waters.

Here Leo Tolstóy first saw, and was deeply impressed by, the beauty of the magnificent mountain range he so well describes in *The Cossacks*. In July 1851 he wrote to his Aunt Tatiána:

Nicholas left within a week of his arrival and I have followed him, so that we have now been almost three weeks here, lodging in a tent. But as the weather is fine and I am getting accustomed to this kind of life, I feel very well. There are magnificent views here, beginning where the springs are situated. It is an enormous mountain of rocks one upon another, some of which are detached and form, as it were, grottoes; others remain suspended at a great height. They are all intersected by torrents of hot water which fall noisily in certain parts, and especially in the morning cover the whole upper part of the mountains with a white vapour which this boiling water continually gives off. The water is so hot that one can boil eggs hard in three minutes. In the middle of

¹ All these stories are included in *The Cossacks and other Tales of the Caucasus*, in the “World’s Classics” series.

this ravine, by the chief torrent, stand three mills one above the other built in a quite peculiar and very picturesque manner. All day long, above and below these mills, Tartar women come unceasingly to wash clothes. I should mention that they wash with their feet. It is like an ant-hill, always in motion. The women for the most part are beautiful and well formed. In spite of their poverty the costumes of Oriental women are graceful. The picturesque groups formed by the women, added to the savage beauty of the place, furnish a really admirable *coup d'œil*. I very often remain for hours admiring the view. Then again, in quite a different way, the view from the top of the mountain is even more beautiful. But I fear to weary you with my descriptions.

I am very glad to be at the springs, for I benefit by them. I take ferruginous baths and no longer have pain in my feet.

As showing how hot these springs were, it may be mentioned that a dog belonging to Nicholas fell into the water and was scalded to death.

The officers Tolstóy met he found to be men without education, and he wrote:

At first many things in this society shocked me, but I have accustomed myself to them without, however, attaching myself to these gentlemen. I have found a happy mean in which there is neither pride nor familiarity.

He was helped by the fact that Nicholas was popular with every one; and by adopting the plan of having vódka, wine, and something to eat, always ready for those who dropped in to see him, he succeeded in keeping on good terms with these men though he did not care to know them intimately.

The following extract from his Diary¹ preserves the record of rapidly changing moods he experienced in those days. Soon after reaching the Caucasus he noted:

Stáry-Yurt, 11th June 1851.

Yesterday I hardly slept all night. Having posted up my Diary, I prayed to God. It is impossible to convey the sweet-

¹ An English edition of *The Diaries of Leo Tolstóy, 1847-52*, has been published (1917) by Dent & Sons, but the translations here given are from the original.

ness of the feeling I experienced during my prayer. I said the prayers I usually repeat by heart: 'Our Father', 'To the Virgin', &c., and still remained in prayer. If one defines prayer as a petition or as thanksgiving, then I did not pray. I desired something supreme and good; but what, I cannot express, though I was clearly conscious of what I wanted. I wished to merge into the Universal Being. I asked Him to pardon my crimes; yet no, I did not ask that, for I felt that if He had given me this blissful moment He had pardoned me. I asked and at the same time felt that I had nothing to ask, and that I cannot and do not know how to ask; I thanked Him, but not with words or thoughts. I combined in one feeling both petition and gratitude. Fear quite vanished. I could not have separated any one emotion—faith, hope, or love—from the general feeling. No, this was what I experienced yesterday: it was love of God, lofty love, uniting in itself all that is good, excluding all that is evil. How dreadful it was to me to see the trivial and vicious side of life! I could not understand its having any attraction for me. How I asked God with a pure heart to accept me into His bosom! I did not feel the flesh. . . . But no, the carnal, trivial side again asserted itself, and before an hour had passed I almost consciously heard the voice of vice, vanity, and the empty side of life; I knew whence that voice came, knew it had ruined my bliss! I struggled against it and yet yielded to it. I fell asleep thinking of fame and of women, but it was not my fault, I could not help it.

Two days later he writes:

I am still indolent, yet am satisfied with myself except in regard to sensuality. Several times when the officers have been talking of cards I have wished to show them that I too can play; but I have always refrained. Even if they ask me to play, I hope I shall decline.

The next entry is on 3rd July:

I wrote the above on 13th June, and have quite wasted my time since, for that very day I was so carried away that I lost at cards 200 rubles of my own, 150 of Nikólenka's, and 500 on credit—a total of 850 rubles. However I am keeping myself in hand and living prudently, except that I have ridden over to Chervlënaya and got drunk there. . . . This is bad and troubles me greatly. Indeed I have never spent more than

two months well or so that I could feel satisfied with myself. . . .

Another day after writing down reflections on suffering and death, he concludes:

How strong I seem to myself to be against all that can happen; how firm in the conviction that one must expect nothing here but death; yet a moment later I am thinking with pleasure of a saddle I have ordered, on which I shall ride dressed in a Cossack cloak, and of how I shall carry on with the Cossack girls; and I fall into despair because my left moustache is higher than my right, and for two hours I straighten it out before the looking-glass.

On 8th July he remarks that if love be what he has read and heard said of it, it is a thing he has never experienced. And he goes on to say:

There was a time when I used to see a girl-student named Zinaída [Molostvóva] whom I liked; but I got to know her only a little. I stayed a week in Kazán, and if you asked me why I did so or what I there found so agreeable, or why I was so happy there, I should say that it was not because I was in love—for I do not know love. Yet such ignorance is, I fancy, the chief feature and the whole charm of love. How morally light-hearted I was during that time! None of the burden of mean passions which now spoils all the pleasure of life for me did I then feel. I did not utter a word of love, yet felt assured that she knew my feelings and that if she liked me it was due to the fact that she understood me. . . . My relations with Zinaída have remained at the stage of a pure yearning of two souls for one another. . . . Shall I never see her again? . . . Not yet abandoned are my schemes for journeying to marry her, and though I am not sure that she would constitute for me happiness, I am in love. . . . Do you remember the Archbishop's garden, Zinaída—the side path? It was on the tip of my tongue to make a declaration, as it was on yours; it was for me to take the initiative, but do you know why I said nothing? It was because I was so happy that I had nothing to wish for and feared to spoil not my, but our, felicity. . . . To the end that gracious period will remain the best of my life's recollections.

On 10th August he accuses himself of a pernicious tendency to discursiveness, and goes on to say of an

author whom he admired sufficiently to translate part of the *Sentimental Journey* into Russian:

Even my favourite author, Sterne, for all his immense talent in narration and clever prattle, is tediously discursive.

After this he goes off at a tangent to say:

No one who has had much to do with the Gipsies will have failed to form the habit of singing Gipsy songs, and whether he sings them well or ill he will find that so doing gives him pleasure and recalls vivid memories. . . .

I was singing such a Gipsy song at my window, *Tell me Why?* a song which, though not one of my favourites, Kátya sang to me one evening when, seated on my knee, she declared that I was the only man she loved, and that the reason she showed favour to others was because her comrades [the others in the choir she belonged to] required it of her, but that she allowed to no one but me liberties that required concealment behind the curtain of modesty. With all my soul I believed her artful gipsy prattle, and I was in a good frame of mind, as I had not been vexed by the arrival of any *visitor*. That is why I love the song and the evening.

He goes on to explain how upset he was when some one listening under his window mistook what he was singing for a Calmuck song.

By August he was back again at Starogládov and, full of energy, risked his life as a volunteer in expeditions against the Chéchens. Meeting Ilyá Tolstóy, an officer and a relation, he was introduced by him to the Commander-in-Chief, General Baryátinski. The latter had noticed Leo Tolstóy during one of the expeditions, and on making his acquaintance complimented him on his bravery and advised him to enter the army. Ilyá Tolstóy urged the same advice, Leo accepted it, and towards the end of October made a tiresome but beautiful seven days' journey to Tiflis with a view to passing examinations enabling him to enter the service as a Cadet. From there he wrote to his Aunt Tatiána a letter containing the first intimation of the vocation that was

ultimately to make him far more famous than Baryá-tinski himself:

Do you remember, dear Aunt, the advice you once gave me—to write novels? Well, I am following your advice, and the occupation I mentioned to you consists in producing literature. I do not know if what I am writing will ever be published, but it is work that amuses me and in which I have persevered too long to abandon it.

The work he was engaged on was *Childhood*, which he seems to have begun while still in Moscow.

An entry in March 1852 in the Diary—which he had neglected for seven months—tells us:

I spent September at Starogládov, journeying to Grózny and Stáry-Yurt, hunting, running after Cossack women, or drinking, writing a little, and translating. In October my brother and I went to Tiflis for me to enter the Service; and there I spent a month in doubt what to do and with vain and foolish plans in my head. Beginning in November I underwent a treatment and spent two months, till the New Year, indoors. But the time, though tedious, passed quietly and usefully, for during it I wrote the whole of Part I [of *Childhood*].

At Tiflis he lived in the 'German' suburb, paying 5 rubles a month for a two-roomed lodging. The main obstacle to his entering the army was that he had neglected to bring with him to the Caucasus a copy of his birth-certificate and other documents. While at Tiflis he played billiards assiduously at a public table. He says:

I played for points with a marker and lost about a thousand to him—indeed, I might have lost my all.

When making this entry, in March 1852, he was able to say that he had then not played cards for six months, and apparently the 'points' for which he played billiards were nominal ones.

On 23 December 1851, having passed an examination to qualify as a Cadet, he wrote to his brother Sergéy announcing that in a few days he expected to receive an

appointment to the 4th Battery of Artillery, and that on the day he received it he would set out for Starogládov and from there go on campaign, and to the best of his ability 'assist with the aid of a cannon in destroying the predatory and turbulent Asiatics'. He goes on to tell of hunting. He had been out nine times, and had killed two foxes and about sixty grey hares. He had also hunted wild boar and deer, but had not killed any.

In the same letter Tolstóy mentions Hádji Murád, the hero of a tale he wrote more than fifty years later and left for posthumous publication. He says:

If you wish to show off with news from the Caucasus, you may recount that a certain Hádji Murád (the second man in importance to Shámyl himself) surrendered a few days ago to the Russian Government. He was the leading dare-devil and 'brave' in all Circassia, but was led to commit a mean action.

1852 A little later, on 6th January 1852, we find him still in Tiflis, writing in French to Aunt Tatiána.

I have just received your letter of 24th November, and reply at once (as I have formed the habit of doing). I wrote to you lately that your letter made me cry, and I blamed my illness for that weakness. I was wrong. For some time past all your letters have had the same effect on me. I always was 'Leo Cry-baby'. Formerly I was ashamed of this weakness, but the tears shed when thinking of you and of your love for us are so sweet that I let them flow without any false shame. Your letter is too full of sadness not to produce the same effect on me. It is you who have always given me counsel and, though unfortunately I have not always followed it, I should wish all my life to act only in accord with your advice. For the moment permit me to tell you the effect your letter has had on me and the thoughts that have come to me while reading it. If I speak too freely I know you will forgive it on account of the love I have for you. By saying that it is your turn to leave us to rejoin those who are no more and whom you have loved so much, by saying that, you ask God to set a limit to your life, which seems to you so insupportable and isolated—pardon me, dear Aunt, but it seems to me that in so saying you offend God and me and all of us who love you so much. You ask God for death, that is to say, for the greatest

misfortune that could happen to me. (This is not a phrase, for God is my witness that the two greatest misfortunes that could come to me would be your death and that of Nicholas—the two persons whom I love more than myself.) What would be left me if God granted your prayer? To please whom should I then wish to become better, to have good qualities, and a good reputation in the world? When I make plans of happiness for myself, the idea that you will share and enjoy my happiness is always present. When I do anything good, I am satisfied with myself because I know you will be satisfied with me. When I act badly, what I most fear is to cause you grief. Your love is everything to me, and you ask God to separate us! I cannot tell you what I feel for you, words do not suffice to express it. I fear lest you should think I exaggerate, and yet I shed burning tears while writing to you.

In the same letter he tells of one of those remarkable ‘answers to prayer’, instances of thought-transference, or (if the reader pleases) simple coincidences, which have played so great a part in the history of all religious bodies.

To-day one of those things happened to me which would have made me believe in God if I had not for some time past firmly believed in Him.

In summer at Stáry-Yurt all the officers who were there did nothing but play, and play rather high. As living in camp we have to meet frequently, I was very often present at play, but in spite of persuasions kept steady for a month; but one fine day, for fun, I put down a small stake. I lost, staked again, and lost again. I was in bad luck; the passion for play reawoke in me and in two days I had lost all the money I had, and what Nicholas gave me (about 250 rubles), and another 500 rubles besides, for which I gave a note-of-hand payable in January 1852.

I should tell you that near the camp there is an Aoul [native village] inhabited by Chéchens. A young fellow (a Chéchen) named Sádó used to come to the camp and play; but as he could neither reckon nor write, there were scamps who cheated him. For that reason I never wished to play against Sádó and I even told him that he ought not to play, because he was being cheated; and I offered to play for him. He was very grateful to me for this and presented me with a purse; and as it is the native custom to exchange presents, I gave him a wretched gun I had bought for 8 rubles. I

should tell you that to become a *kunák*, that is to say, a *friend*, it is customary to exchange presents and afterwards to eat in the house of one's *kunák*. After that, according to the ancient custom of these peoples (which hardly exists now except as a tradition) you become friends for life and death: that is to say, if I asked of him all his money, or his wife, or his weapons, or all the most precious things he has, he must give them to me, and I also must not refuse him anything. Sádó made me promise to come to his house and become his *kunák*. I went. After having regaled me in their fashion, he asked me to choose anything in his house that I liked: his weapons, his horse—anything. I wished to choose what was of least value and took a horse's bridle with silver mountings, but he said I was offending him, and obliged me to take a sword worth at least 100 rubles.

His father is a rather rich man, but keeps his money buried and does not give his son a cent. The son, to have money, goes and steals horses and cows from the enemy. Sometimes he risks his life twenty times to steal something not worth 10 rubles, but he does it not from greed but because it is 'the thing'. The greatest robber is most esteemed, and is called *Dzhigít*, 'a *Brave*'. Sometimes Sádó has 1,000 rubles, sometimes not a cent. After one visit to him I gave him Nicholas's silver watch and we became the greatest friends in the world. He had proved his devotion several times by exposing himself to danger for my sake; but that is nothing to him—it has become a habit and a pleasure.

When I left Stáry-Yurt and Nicholas remained there, Sádó used to go to him every day, saying that he did not know how to get on without me and that he felt terribly dull. I wrote to Nicholas saying that as my horse was ill I begged him to find me one at Stáry-Yurt. Sádó having learnt this, must needs come to me and give me his horse in spite of all I could do to refuse it.

After the folly I committed in playing at Stáry-Yurt, I did not touch a card again and I was always lecturing Sádó, who is devoted to gambling and though he does not know how to play always has astonishing luck. Yesterday evening I was engaged in considering my money matters and my debts and thinking how I was to pay them. Having long thought of these things, I saw that if I do not spend too much, all my debts will not embarrass me but can be paid off little by little in two or three years; but the 500 rubles that I had to pay this month threw me into despair. It was impossible for me

to pay it, and at the moment it embarrassed me much more than did previously the 4,000 to Ogaróv. After having contracted those debts in Russia, the stupidity of coming here and adding fresh ones made me despair. In the evening while saying my prayers I asked God—and very fervently—to help me out of this disagreeable scrape. ‘But how can I get out of this scrape?’ thought I as I lay down. ‘Nothing can happen that will make it possible for me to meet that debt,’ I already pictured all the unpleasantnesses I should have to go through because of it: how when he presents the note for collection, the authorities will demand an explanation as to why I did not pay, &c. ‘Lord, help me!’ said I, and fell asleep.

Next day I received a letter from Nicholas enclosing yours and several others. He wrote me:

‘The other day Sádó came to see me. He has won your notes-of-hand from Knorring and has brought them to me. He was so pleased to have won them, and asked me so often, “What do you think? Will your brother be glad that I have done this?” that I have grown very fond of him. That man is really attached to you.’

Is it not astonishing to see one’s petitions granted like this the very next day? That is to say, there is nothing so wonderful as the divine goodness to one who merits it so little as I do. And is not the trait of Sádó’s devotion admirable? He knows I have a brother Sergéy who loves horses and, as I have promised to take him to Russia when I go, he tells me that, if it costs him his life 100 times over, he will steal the best horse to be found in the mountains and will take it to him.

Please have a 6-barrelled pistol bought in Túla and sent to me, and also a musical-box if that does not cost too much. These are things which will give him much pleasure.

In explanation of this letter one has to mention that Sádó was a ‘peaceful’ Chéchen, that is, one friendly to Russia, though his tribe in general were hostile.

A few days later we find Tolstóy on his way back to Starogládov, and while stopping at the post-station of Mozdók, again writing to his aunt a long letter in which he says:

Religion and the experience I have of life (however small it may be) have taught me that life is a trial. In my case it is more than a trial, it is also an expiation of my faults.

It seems to me that the frivolous idea I had of journeying to the Caucasus was an idea with which I was inspired from above. It is the hand of God that has guided me—I do not cease to thank Him for it. I feel that I have become better here (and that is not saying much for I was very bad) and I am firmly persuaded that all that can happen to me here can only be for my good since it is God himself who has so willed it. Perhaps it is a very audacious notion, nevertheless it is my conviction. That is why I bear the fatigues and physical privations I have mentioned (they are not physical privations—there are none for a fellow of 23 who is in good health) without resenting them, and even with a kind of pleasure in thinking of the happiness that awaits me.

This is how I picture it:

After an indefinite number of years, neither young nor old, I am at Yásnaya; my affairs are in order, I have no anxieties or worries. You also live at Yásnaya. You have aged a little, but you are still fresh and in good health. We lead the life we used to lead. I work in the morning but we see one another almost all day. We have dinner. In the evening I read aloud something which does not weary you, and then we talk. I tell you of my life in the Caucasus, you tell me your recollections of my father and my mother; and you tell me the 'terrible tales' we used to listen to with frightened eyes and open mouths. We remind each other of those who were dear to us and are now no more; you will weep, I shall do the same, but those tears will be sweet; we shall talk about my brothers, who will come to see us from time to time; of dear Márya, who with all her children will also spend some months of the year at Yásnaya which she loves so much. We shall have no acquaintances—no one will come to weary us and tell tales. It is a beautiful dream, but it is not all that I let myself dream—I am married. My wife is a gentle creature, kind and affectionate; she has the same love for you that I have. We have children who call you Grand-mamma; you live upstairs in the big house, in what used to be Grandmamma's room. The whole house is as it was in Papa's time, and we recommence the same life, only changing our rôles. You take the rôle of Grandmamma, but you are still better; I take Papa's place, though I despair of ever deserving it; my wife, that of Mamma; the children take ours; Márya, that of the two aunts (except their misfortunes) . . . but some one will be lacking to take the part you played in our family—never will any one be found with a soul so

beautiful, so loving, as yours. You have no successor! There will be three new characters who will appear from time to time on the scene—the brothers, especially the one who will often be with us, Nicholas: an old bachelor, bald, retired from service, as good and noble as ever.

I imagine how he will, as of old, tell the children fairy tales of his own invention, and how they will kiss his greasy hands (but which are worthy of it), how he will play with them, how my wife will bustle about to get him his favourite dishes, how he and I will recall our common memories of days long past, how you will sit in your accustomed place and listen to us with pleasure; how as of yore you will call us, old men, 'Lëvockha' and 'Nikólenka', and will scold me for eating with my fingers and him for not having clean hands.

If they made me Emperor of Russia or gave me Peru: in a word, if a fairy came with her wand asking me what I wished for—my hand on my conscience, I should reply that I only wish that this dream may become a reality.

He returned to Starogládov, and at the end of January 1852, and during nearly all February, was engaged on an expedition as a Cadet in the artillery. On 17th and 18th February he took part in fierce fighting and in the capture of a village, an event which he described much later, in Chapters XVI and XVII of *Hádji Murád*.

The kind of warfare he was engaged on is also well described in *The Raid* and *The Wood-Felling*. A detachment would set out to seize a Tartar village, make a clearing in a forest, or capture cattle. It would exchange cannon-shot with Tartar skirmishers and would lose perhaps half a dozen men killed or wounded before accomplishing its object; but the more serious part came when the expedition retired to its fortified camp. As soon as the retreat commenced, Tartar sharpshooters would swarm out trying to cut off stragglers and inflicting as much damage as possible. Even after the Russians were beyond musket-range a chance cannon-ball from the Tartars might reach them within sight of their own quarters.

To see a single man one knows struck down by a deadly bullet may impress an observer as vividly as the

myriad corpses of a great battlefield, and in Tolstóy's earliest war-sketches one feels the horror of war just as strongly as when, later on, he describes the far bloodier struggle at Sevastopol.

Having left home with no idea of entering the army he had not brought with him a certificate of discharge from the Civil Service, which he now needed, and for lack of which he missed receiving a St. George's Cross awarded to him for bravery.

Writing to his Aunt Tatiána he says:

During this expedition, I twice had the chance of being presented to receive a St. George's Cross, but was prevented from receiving it by that confounded paper being a few days late. I was nominated to receive it on 18th February (my name-day), but it had to be refused me for lack of that paper. The list of nominations was sent off on the 19th, the paper came on the 20th. I frankly confess that of all military honours, that little cross is the only one I have the vanity to desire.

On that 18th February his life had been in imminent danger, for an enemy shell struck the carriage of a gun he was training, smashed it, and exploded at his feet. Strangely enough Tolstóy was not wounded.

Subsequently two more crosses were sent to his battery, and one of them was at his disposal; but at a hint from Alexéev, the kindly Colonel, instead of keeping it for himself Tolstóy let it go to an old and deserving private, to whom it meant a life-pension.

He had a third chance of obtaining the cross during the winter campaign of 1852-3, but this time, having played chess till late at night he omitted to go on duty next morning and the commander of the division, noticing his absence, placed him under arrest and cancelled the award which had been already drawn up in his favour.

While under arrest he heard the band playing and the drums beating while the awards were being distributed and, as he told his wife years later, 'I yielded to utter despair'. In his Diary he noted: 'That I have

not got the cross grieves me much. Am even sorry I did not decline to apply for a commission.'

Hope again revived and was again disappointed, for just before leaving the Caucasus (on 20th January 1854) he notes in his Diary: 'The news that I am not to be awarded a cross hurt me very much, but strange to say an hour later I had recovered my spirits.'

Chess, I may here mention, was always a favourite game of Tolstóy's and is frequently mentioned in his Diaries. He never studied the game from books, but he played much and with ingenuity and skill.

On 29 March 1852 he notes:

The pettiness of my life worries me. True I feel this because I am myself petty, but I have the capacity in me to despise myself and my life. There is something in me that forces me to believe that I was not born to be what other men are. What does this come from? From lack of concord and absence of harmony among my faculties, or from the fact that I really do stand on a higher level than ordinary men? I have reached maturity, the season of development is passing or has passed, and I am tortured with a hunger—not for fame—but to acquire great influence for the furthering of the happiness and benefit of mankind.

There is repeated mention in the Diary of the fact that his brother Nicholas, for whom in all other respects Leo had the highest esteem, drank too much. On 31st March 1852, an entry runs:

Got to Alexéev's [the commander of his regiment] when every one else had sat down to table, and my brother was in a pitiable condition. So painful was it to see him that I left as soon as the meal was over and settled down to my writing. I finished one chapter. Nikólenka arrived, still in the same condition. I went out shooting and learnt later from Bálda that he [Nicholas] had run amok on the parade ground. It is a pity that he does not know how grieved I am to see him drunk. I feel sure that, since drunkenness gives him little pleasure, he would then refrain.

When not on campaign Tolstóy was generally stationed at the Cossack village of Starogládov, where he

lived more or less the life vividly described in *The Cossacks*. The Grebénsk Cossacks located there were descended from Russian Dissenters (Old-Believers) who had fled from the persecution of former Tsars and settled among the Mohammedan Chéchens near the river Térek. They retained the purity of their Russian speech and remained nominally Christian, but had intermarried with the natives and adopted many of their manners and customs. Love of freedom, idleness, robbery, hunting, and war, were their most prominent characteristics. They considered themselves altogether superior to the semi-savage Mohammedan natives and to the tame, disciplined, Russians. Drunkenness was not so much a weakness of these men as 'a tribal rite, to abandon which would have been considered an act of apostasy'. The work was done by the women, or by hired Nogái-Tartar labourers. The women were physically better developed than the men and were celebrated for their beauty, combining the purest type of Circassian features with the powerful build of Northern women. In their relations with men, especially before marriage, they enjoyed absolute freedom.

There was much that attracted Tolstóy in the simple life of these people: their frankness, their skill in hunting, their contempt for everything artificial or weak, and their freedom from such moral struggles as tormented him. By one beautiful girl, Solomónida (the Mariána of *The Cossacks*) he was greatly attracted, but she remained indifferent to the attentions of Russian cadets and officers who were inferior in the arts of war and hunting to the young men of her own tribe. His courtship failed (as Tolstóy says of his hero in *The Cossacks*) because he could not, like a dashing young Cossack, 'steal herds, get drunk on Tchikir wine, troll songs, kill people, and when tipsy climb in at her window at night without thinking who he was or why he existed'.

One must always be on one's guard against taking Tolstóy's stories as autobiography, but there are passages in *The Cossacks* which certainly apply to himself and give

a vivid idea of his moods at this time as well as of his way of life while living as a cadet at Starogládov.

On one occasion Olénin (the hero of the story) is out hunting in the woods and asks himself:

‘How must I live so as to be happy, and why was I formerly not happy?’ And he remembered his previous life, and felt disgusted with himself. . . . And suddenly a new light seemed revealed to him. ‘Happiness’, said he to himself, ‘consists in living for others. That is clear. The demand for happiness is innate in man and therefore it is legitimate. If we seek to satisfy it selfishly, by seeking wealth, fame, comforts, or love, circumstances may render the satisfaction of these desires impossible. It follows that they are illegitimate, but not that the demand for happiness itself is illegitimate. But what desire is there that can always be satisfied despite external conditions? What desire? Love, self-sacrifice!’ He was so glad and excited at discovering this, as it seemed to him, new truth, that he jumped up and began impatiently seeking for some one for whom he might quickly sacrifice himself, to whom he might do good, and whom he could love. ‘Yes; I need nothing for myself!’ he kept mentally repeating: ‘Then why not live for others?’

In the same story Tolstóy tells us that his hero lived monotonously and regularly.

He had little to do with his commander or fellow-officers. In the Caucasus the position of a cadet with means of his own was in this respect peculiarly favourable. He was not sent to drill nor kept at work. As a reward for going on an expedition he was recommended for a commission, and meanwhile he was left alone. The officers considered him an aristocrat, and therefore in their intercourse with him bore themselves with dignity. Card-playing and the officers’ carousals with singers, of which he had had experience when on service with the detachment, seemed to him unattractive and he avoided the officers’ society.

Again he tells us that his hero often thought seriously of abandoning all else, enrolling himself as a Cossack, buying a cottage and marrying a Cossack girl . . . and living with Uncle Eróshka, going with him to hunt and fish and with the Cossacks on expeditions. ‘Why don’t I do this? What am I waiting for?’ he asked himself. . . .

But a voice told him to wait and not decide. He was restrained by a dim consciousness that he could not fully live the life of Eróshka and Lukáshka because he had another happiness—he was restrained by the thought that happiness lies in self-sacrifice. . . . He continually sought an opportunity to sacrifice himself for others, but it did not present itself.

In the same story the Cossack Lukáshka kills a Tartar 'brave' at night and rises greatly in popular esteem and in his own; and the hero thinks to himself:

'What nonsense and confusion! A man kills another and is as happy and satisfied as though he had done an excellent deed. Does nothing tell him there is here no great cause for rejoicing? That happiness consists not in killing others but in sacrificing oneself?'

We have a yet safer record of Tolstóy's feelings in his Diary, in which about this time he noted down reflections to the following effect concerning the three chief faults he was conscious of in himself: 'The passion of gaming is a covetous passion, gradually developing into a craving for strong excitement. Against this passion one can struggle. Sensuality is a physical need, a demand of the body excited by imagination. It increases with abstinence and therefore the struggle against it is very difficult. The best way is by work and occupation. Vanity is the passion least harmful to others and most harmful to oneself.'

In another place, indicating quite a different phase of consciousness, he writes:

For some time past repentance for the loss of the best years of life has begun to torment me, and this since I commenced to feel that I could do something good. . . . There is something in me which compels me to believe that I was not born to be like everybody else.

In May we find him going on furlough to Pyatigórsk to drink the mineral water and to be treated for rheumatism. This is his description of Pyatigórsk, written nearly twenty years later in his *Reading Book for Children*:

Pyatigórsk (Five Hills) is so called because it stands on

Mount Besh-tau. *Besh* means in Tartar 'five', *Tau* means 'hill'. From this mountain flows a hot sulphur stream. The water is boiling and over the places where it springs from the mountain there is always steam as from a *samovár*.

The whole place where the town stands is very gay. From the mountain flow hot springs, and at the foot of the mountain flows the river Podkúmok. The mountain slopes are wooded, all around are fields, and afar off one sees the great Caucasian mountains. On these the snow never melts, and they are always as white as sugar. When the weather is clear, wherever one goes one sees the great mountain Elbrus, like a sugar-cone. People come to the hot springs for their health, and over the springs arbours and awnings have been erected, and gardens and paths have been laid out all around. In the morning a band plays and people drink the waters, or bathe, or stroll about.

Here he found his sister Márya and her husband. She, too, had come to Pyatigórsk to be cured of rheumatism. She tells how her brother was at this time attracted by Spiritualism, and would sometimes even borrow a table from a café and have a *séance* on the boulevard. He remained in Pyatigórsk till 5th August and then returned to Starogládov.

He mentions that for some time past he had acquired a taste for reading history, and says that he perseveres in his literary occupations. He had already three times rewritten a work he had in hand (*Childhood*), and intended to rewrite it again. He felt much more content with himself at this period and adds:

There was a time when I was vain of my intelligence, of my position in the world, and of my name; but now I know and feel that if there is anything good in me, and if I have anything to thank Providence for, it is for a good heart, sensitive and capable of love, which it has been pleased to give me and to preserve in me.

On 19th June 1852 from Pyatigórsk he writes:

I have till now committed no follies in this place. It will be the first town from which I shall carry away with me no repentance; so I will not blame myself for petty weaknesses or indiscretions.

Later that month he writes:

I have never lived more blamelessly or felt myself morally more satisfied than during the last months, since I was at Tiflis.

He was re-reading Rousseau who had greatly influenced him in his student days, and he notes:

Began to read the *Confessions*, which, unfortunately, I cannot help criticizing.

Later he writes:

Read Rousseau and feel how far higher he stands in culture and in talent than I, though lower in self-respect, firmness, and judgment.

At the end of June owing to his financial difficulties he notes:

I may lose Yásnaya, which, despite all philosophy, would be a terrible blow to me.

In August he instructs his brother Sergéy to sell the large wooden house in which they had been born, as he needed the money to pay his debts. The house was a well-built, three-storey one containing forty-two rooms, and was sold for 5,000 assignation rubles (about £230), to be pulled down. It was re-erected by the purchaser about twelve miles away.

The following literary notes made at different times are worth recording:

8th October 1852: I must for ever abandon the idea of writing without correction: three or four times over is still not enough.

And the corrections must first of all consist of abbreviation, the excision of all that is unnecessary, superfluous, and weak.

On a later occasion:

No talented addition can improve a work as much as it can be improved by deletions.

1st December 1853: Literary success satisfying oneself is only obtained by working at every aspect of a subject. But the subject must be a lofty one for the labour always to be pleasant.

On 2nd July 1852 he completed *Childhood*, and a few days later dispatched the manuscript, signed only with the initials L. N., to the best Petersburg monthly, *The Contemporary*. On 28th August he received a reply from the editor, the poet Nekrásov, saying he would publish the story and thought its author had talent. Another letter, dated 5th September, followed, in which Nekrásov said that having re-read the story in proof he found it 'much better than I had realized at first. I can say definitely that its author has talent'. He added that it would appear in the next number of his magazine.

Tolstóy notes in his Diary:

'Received letter from Nekrásov; praise, but no money.'

Nekrásov's next letter was dated 30th October and explains that it is not customary to pay authors for their first work, but that he hopes Tolstóy will send him more stories, and that in future he will pay him as much as to the very best-known writers, namely, 50 rubles (about £7 at that time) per sheet of sixteen pages. He mentioned also that *Childhood* had been very well received by the public.

When Tolstóy received the *Contemporary* containing his story he was, however, much annoyed to find that its title had been altered to *The History of my Childhood*. On 27th November he wrote to Nekrásov:

Without mentioning small changes I will note two which struck me most disagreeably. . . . The title *Childhood* and my *few words of preface, explained the idea of the work*; but the title *The History of My Childhood* contradicts it. Who wants to be bothered with a history of *my* childhood! The alteration is especially disagreeable because, as I wrote to you in my first letter, I wished *Childhood* to form the first part of a novel.

Much injustice has been done to Tolstóy by faulty editions of his works, and unfortunately the 'Everyman' series still supplies its readers with a version which begins with *The History of my Childhood* and contains a preface which represents the work as being autobiographical, despite Tolstóy's emphatic repudiation of that suggestion.

From the first he had adopted a style which suited him—the psychological novel, the chief interest of which lies not in the events that occur but in the feelings which prompt the actions of the characters.

On the nature of Tolstóy's early works I cannot do better than summarize what was said by Prince D. S. Mirsky in a lecture he gave to the Tolstóy Society.

He remarked that it is impossible to write a history of the novel without giving Tolstóy his place in it, for his place is one of the most central. He may be said to stand at the crucial point where the modern novel begins. Everything before Tolstóy belongs to a pre-historic stage of the novel—and much that comes after him. If there is a dividing line between the old and the modern novel, Tolstóy marks it. His immediate predecessors in the development of the modern novel were the great French analytical novelists—Rousseau and Stendhal. Tolstóy always mentions these two when speaking of those who influenced him. He himself heralds a change in the texture of the narrative from the old dramatic method (which is still the method of Dostoévski) to a new method, 'the point of view method'. The dramatic method consists of giving the actions and words of the characters without an explanation. Tolstóy, in his earlier period, never gives the actions or words of his characters without an explanation. With him the psychological explanation is the important thing. What is important is not what his people do, it is why they do it that matters. . . . But this applies only to the early Tolstóy.

In the first period Tolstóy was preparing himself for his great works, he was forming a certain technique of analysis by which he could lay his finger on the mechanism of the internal preparation of human action. He was gradually perfecting an instrument of analysis which allowed him to go far deeper than any one before him into the deeper layers of the consciousness. He goes to the original fact, and by a new combination of these divided particles of reality creates a new concrete

reality. This preparatory period is, on the whole, free from all consideration of construction. When Tolstóy does turn to construction he gives his stories a moralistic construction, as for example in *The Two Hussars*.

Tolstóy kept his authorship a secret, revealing it to no one except Nicholas and Aunt Tatiána. His sister Márya was by this time back at her husband's estate, situated near Turgénev's village of Spásski. There Turgénev came one day to visit her, bringing with him the last number of the *Contemporary*. Full of praise of a new story by an unknown author he began reading it aloud, and to her great astonishment Márya recognized several incidents from her own childhood. Her first guess was that Nicholas must have written it.

Among writers who at once acclaimed Tolstóy's genius was Panáev, co-editor of the *Contemporary*. He, Turgénev pretended, had to be carefully shunned by his friends on the Névski (the chief street in Petersburg) lest he should insist on reading them extracts from the new story. Before long the work reached Dostoévski in Siberia, and he was so struck by it that he wrote to a friend asking him to find out who the talented L. N. was.

Meanwhile, Tolstóy continued his military career in the Caucasus. On his return to Starogládov in August 1852 he had noted in his Diary: 'Simplicity—that is the quality which above all others I desire to attain.'

He had to pass an unpleasant month in consequence of the autumn manœuvres, about which he wrote: 'It was not very pleasant to have to march about and fire off cannons, especially as it disturbed the regularity of my life'; and he rejoiced when it was over and he was again able to devote himself to 'hunting, writing, reading, and conversation with Nicholas'. He had become fond of shooting game, at which—as at all physical exercises—he was expert; and he spent two or three hours a day at it. He writes to his Aunt Tatiána:

At 100 paces from my lodging I find wild fowl, and in half an hour I kill 2, 3, or 4. Besides the pleasure, the exercise is excellent for my health, which in spite of the waters is not

very good. I am not ill, but I often catch cold and suffer from sore throat, or from toothache, or from rheumatism, so that I have to keep to my room at least two days in the week.

One of the forms of sport he enjoyed during his stay in the Caucasus was shooting steppe grouse. Before they migrate in mid-August these birds assemble in enormous flocks and are extremely wild and difficult of approach. It is hardly possible to get within two hundred, or two hundred and fifty, yards of such a flock. Tolstóy had a horse that was specially trained for this particular sport. On it he used to ride at a foot-pace two or three times round a flock, carefully narrowing the circle till he got as near as possible without alarming the birds. Then he would dash forward at full gallop with his gun ready. The moment the birds rose he dropped his reins on the horse's neck and the well-trained animal would instantly stop, allowing its master to take aim.

On his birthday, 28th August 1852, he notes:

Am now 24, yet have accomplished nothing. I feel that not in vain have I for eight years struggled with doubt and with my passions. For what am I destined? The future will reveal it.

On 19 October 1852 he notes:

Simplicity is the first condition of moral beauty. For readers to sympathize with a hero they must recognize in him their weaknesses as well as their virtues: virtues that are possible, weaknesses that are inevitable.

One knows that in his own works Tolstóy did not hesitate to display his weaknesses as well as his good qualities.

While away from home on a hunting expedition with some officer acquaintances, Tolstóy came upon the last number of the monthly *Fatherland Notes*, containing a highly appreciative notice of *Childhood*. Years later he told his wife:

I lay on a bunk in a hut, with my brother and another officer there, and I read it, feasting with delight on its praise;

and thought to myself: 'Nobody knows, not even those fellows there, that it is I who am being so praised.'

His military career was not giving him satisfaction. He had been in the Caucasus nine months before entering the army, and having left home without any definite plans he had, as already mentioned, neglected to bring his birth-certificate and other necessary papers. The result of this was that instead of becoming an officer within eighteen months as he expected to do when he entered the army, he now, after serving for ten months, received notice that he would have to continue another three years before he could have a commission.

In this difficulty he applied to his aunt P.I. Yúshkova, who by application to an influential friend eventually succeeded in somewhat hastening his promotion. Meanwhile however, Tolstóy—who had made up his mind to retire from the army as soon as he got his commission—almost lost patience.

On 29th October he wrote a letter to Auntie Tatiána in which, after describing his infatuation with hunting, he mentions the unsatisfactory state of his health, and adds:

Do not imagine that I am concealing anything from you. I have a strong frame but have always had weak health.

During the year 1852 he had generally kept himself well in hand, had not played cards at all, had been industrious, and, as is shown by his Diary, had thought much and deeply on religion and the duty of man, and his opinions fluctuated, as they did during the next thirty years. Here are some notes from his Diary during 1852.

20th March: Not less than before do I believe and doubt. . . I confess that one of the chief aspirations of my life has been to attain a firm and unalterable belief in something.

29th June: Read *Profession de Foi du Vicaire Savoyard* [from Rousseau's *Emile*]. It is full of contradictions, of obscure abstract passages, and of exceptional beauty. The main point I have got from it is conviction of the non-immortality

of the soul. If for the idea of immortality the idea of recollection of a former existence is required, then we are not immortal. And my mind refuses to comprehend endlessness at one end. Some one has said that the sign of truth is clarity. One may dispute this, yet clarity remains the best token, and by it one must always verify one's opinions. *Conscience* is our best and most reliable guide. But where are the signs that distinguish it as a voice from other voices? For pride speaks with equal force, as for instance when an injury calls for revenge.

He whose aim is his own happiness, is bad; he whose aim is the good opinion of others is weak; he whose aim is the happiness of others, is virtuous; he whose aim is God, is great. . . . *That is bad for me which is bad for others; that is good for me which is good for others.* So conscience always speaks. . . . *The aim of life is goodness.* It is a sentiment inherent in our souls. *The way to good living is by knowledge of good and evil. . . . We are good only when our whole strength is constantly directed to that aim. . . .* Is, then, every diversion, every pleasure which brings no advantage to others, an evil? I do not find my conscience reproach me for such things, but on the contrary it commends me for them. Hence that voice is not the voice of conscience. Early or late, conscience reproaches me for every moment not utilized to advantage, even if no harm be done.

13th July: *The desire of the body is for personal good. The desire of the soul is for the good of others.* One cannot decline to admit the immortality of the soul, but one can decline to admit the soul's annihilation. *If the body separated from the soul perishes, yet where is the evidence that the soul perishes? Suicide is the most striking expression and evidence of the soul, and its existence is an evidence of its immortality. I have seen that a body dies; so I assume that mine will do so; but nothing proves to me that the soul dies, and so I say that, according to my understanding, it is immortal.*

18th July: I pray like this: O God, deliver me from evil, i.e. from the temptation to do evil, and dower me with good, i.e. with capacity to do good. Will good or evil befall me? Thy will be done.

Can it be that I shall never reach a conception of God as clear as the conception of goodness? That is now my strongest desire.

17th August: Nothing has so convinced me of the existence of God and of our relation towards Him, as the thought that the capacities of all animals are given them in accord with

the needs which they have to satisfy. Not more, and not less. For what has the capacity to conceive of cause, eternity, infinity, and omnipotence, been given to man? The assumption of the existence of God is an hypothesis supported by indications. And faith, in accordance with man's development, complements the correctness of that hypothesis.

14th November: Have drawn up a short formula of my creed, as follows:

'I believe in the one, good, and incomprehensible God, in the immortality of the soul, and in eternal recompense for our deeds. What though I do not understand the mysteries of the Trinity and of the birth of the Son of God? I honour, and do not reject, the faith of my fathers.'

On 24th December 1852, he completed the sketch entitled *The Raid: A Volunteer's Story*, and two days later posted it to the *Contemporary*, in which magazine it appeared in March 1853. The following passage occurs in this his first story of war, and foreshadows the attitude he ultimately made his own. He is describing a march through Caucasian scenery to a night attack on a Tartar *Aoul*, and he says:

Nature, beautiful and strong, breathed conciliation.

Can it be that people have not room to live in this beautiful world, under this measureless starry heaven? Can feelings of enmity, vengeance, or lust to destroy one's fellow beings retain their hold on man's soul amid this enchanting Nature? All that is evil in man's heart should, one would think, vanish in contact with Nature—this immediate expression of beauty and goodness.

From the very start we find Tolstóy hampered in his work by that incubus of all Russian writers, the Censor. In a letter to his brother Sergéy in May he writes '*Childhood* was spoilt and *The Raid* simply ruined by the Censor. All that was good in it has been struck out or mutilated.' In comparing Tolstóy's literary achievement with that of Western writers one should make a large allowance for the continual annoyance, delay, mutilation, and suppression, inflicted on him by the satellite of despotism.

At the New Year the battery in which Leo Tolstóy served went once more on active service against 1853 Shámyl. The expedition assembled at Fort Grózny, where scenes of debauchery occurred.

That campaign in general had a demoralizing effect on Tolstóy, and on 20th January 1853 he notes:

My life is extremely disorderly, so that I do not recognize myself and am ashamed to live like this. Have played cards, lost 40 rubles, and shall play again.

And next day:

What of the much-extolled good the Caucasus was to do me, when I am leading such a life as this?

On 16th February at night and on the 17th, on the eve of his name-day, curiously enough almost exactly a year after the day on which his life had been in great danger, he was again engaged in a sharp fight in which Shámyl was heavily defeated.

The conditions of life referred to continued for several months, and on 25th June 1853 he notes:

I have latterly begun to turn attention on myself and have become intolerably repulsive to myself. . . . This damned army detachment has completely jolted me out of the path of goodness on which I had entered so well and which I wish to resume at any cost because it is the best path. Lord, teach and direct me!

Not till towards the end of the year did he again settle down to a life of regular industry and self-control.

In May we find him writing to his brother Sergéy that he had applied for his discharge and hoped in six weeks' time to return home a free man. Difficult as his admission to the army had been, he found however that to retire was a yet harder matter, destined to take not weeks but years.

On 25th June his life was again in danger, owing to an adventure which supplied him with the subject-matter he utilized later on in *A Prisoner in the Caucasus*.¹

It being dangerous to travel between the Russian

¹ In *Twenty-Three Tales*.

forts without an escort, non-combatants as well as stores and baggage were periodically convoyed from one post to another. On these expeditions it was forbidden to detach oneself from the main body; but the intolerable slowness of the infantry march on a hot day frequently tempted those who were mounted to ride on, even at the risk of being attacked by the Tartars. On one such occasion five horsemen, including Tolstóy and his friend Sádó, disobeyed the regulations and rode ahead. The two friends ascended a hillside to see whether any foes were visible, while their three companions proceeded along the valley below. Hardly had they reached the crest of the ridge than they saw thirty mounted Tartars galloping towards them. As there was not time to rejoin their companions in the valley, Tolstóy shouted them a warning and raced off along the ridge towards Fort Grózný which was their destination. The three did not at first take his warning seriously, but wasting some precious moments before turning to rejoin the column were overtaken by the Tartars, and two of them were very severely wounded before a rescue party from the convoy put the enemy to flight. Meanwhile Tolstóy and Sádó, pursued by seven horsemen along the hill-ridge, had to ride nearly three miles to reach the fort. It happened that Tolstóy was trying a young horse of Sádó's, while Sádó was riding Tolstóy's ambler which could not gallop. Though Tolstóy could easily have escaped on Sádó's fiery horse, he would not desert his comrade. Sádó had a gun, unluckily not loaded, and so he could only make pretence of aiming at his pursuers. It seemed almost certain that both fugitives would be killed; but apparently the Tartars decided to capture them alive—wishing perhaps to revenge themselves on Sádó for being a pro-Russian—and therefore did not shoot them down. At last a sentinel at Grózný espied their plight, gave the alarm, and some Cossacks from the garrison galloped to their rescue. At sight of these the Tartars made off, and the fugitives escaped uninjured.

It may here be mentioned that one of the impressions Tolstóy left on those who knew him in the Caucasus was that of his fine horsemanship and boldness as a rider.

From the middle of July to October, Tolstóy again stayed at Pyatigórsk, and then returned to Starogládov, and during the last months of his sojourn in the Caucasus he seems again to have settled down to a life of industry and self-restraint.

A companion he had brought with him to the Caucasus was his black bull-dog Búlka. He intended to leave it at home, but after he had started the dog broke a pane of glass and escaped from the room in which it was confined, and when Tolstóy after stopping at the first post-station was just resuming his journey, he saw something black racing along the road after him. It was Búlka, who rushed to his master, licked his hand, and lay down panting in the shade of a cart. The dog had galloped nearly fourteen miles in the heat of the day and was rewarded by being taken to the Caucasus, where it was destined to meet with many adventures.

On one occasion it boldly attacked a wild boar and had its stomach ripped open by the latter's tusk. While its wound was being sewn up the dog licked its master's hand.

On another occasion when Tolstóy was sitting at night with a friend in the village street, intending to start for Pyatigórsk at daybreak, they suddenly heard a sucking-pig squeal and guessed that a wolf was killing it. Tolstóy ran into the house, seized a loaded gun, and returned in time to see the wolf running straight towards him from the other side of a wattle-fence. The wolf jumped on to the top of the fence and descended close to Tolstóy who, almost touching it with the muzzle of his gun, pressed the trigger. The gun missed fire, and the wolf raced off chased by Búlka and by Tolstóy's setter, Milton. The wolf escaped, but not till it had snapped at Búlka and inflicted a slight wound on his head. Strange to say, the wolf ventured to return a little later into the middle of the street and again escaped unhurt.

Not long after, in Pyatigórsrk shortly before Tolstóy left the Caucasus, while drinking coffee in the garden of his lodging, he heard a tremendous noise of men and dogs, and on inquiry learnt that convicts had been let out of gaol to kill the dogs of whom there were too many in the town, but that orders had been given to spare dogs wearing collars. As ill luck would have it Tolstóy had removed Búlka's collar; and Búlka, apparently recognizing the convicts as his natural enemies, rushed out into the street and flew at one of them. A man had just freed the long hook he carried from the corpse of a dog he had caught and held down while his companions beat it to death with bludgeons. He now adroitly hooked Búlka and drew the unfortunate dog towards him calling to his mate to kill it, which the latter prepared to do. Búlka however bounded aside with such force that the skin of his thigh burst where the hook held it, and with tail between his legs and a red wound in his thigh he flew back into the house and hid under Tolstóy's bed. His escape was not of much use. The wolf that had snapped at him six weeks before must have been mad, for Búlka after showing premonitory symptoms of rabies, disappeared and was never heard of more.

Tolstóy's state of mind during the latter part of this year is indicated by his letters. To his brother Sergéy he wrote on 20th July 1853:

I think I already wrote you that I have sent in my resignation. God knows however, on account of the war with Turkey, whether it will be accepted, or when. This disturbs me very much, for I have grown so accustomed to happy thoughts of soon settling down in the country, that to return to Starogládov and again wait unendingly—as I have to wait for everything connected with my service—will be very unpleasant.

In December 1853 he writes from Starogládov:

Please write about my papers quickly. This is necessary. '*When shall I come home?*' God only knows. For nearly a year I have been thinking only of how to sheathe my sword, but still cannot manage it. And as I must fight somewhere, I think

it will be pleasanter to do so in Turkey than here, and I have therefore applied to Prince Serge Dmítrievich [Gorchakóv] about it, and he writes me that he has written to his brother, but what the result will be I do not know.

It will be remembered that Tolstóy's paternal grandmother was a Gorchakóv. Through her he was nearly related to Prince S.-D. Gorchakóv and to his brother, Prince Michael Dmítrievich Gorchakóv, who had been a friend of his father's in the war of 1812 and was now in command of the Russian army on the Danube.

The letter continues:

At any rate by New Year I expect to change my way of life, which I confess wearies me intolerably. Stupid officers, stupid conversations, and nothing else. If there were but a single man to whom one could open one's soul. Turgénev is right: 'What irony there is in solitude'—one becomes palpably stupid oneself. Although Nikolenka has gone off with the dogs—Heaven knows why (Epískha¹ and I often call him 'a pig' for so doing)—I go out hunting alone for whole days at a time from morning to evening, with a setter. That is my only pleasure—and not a pleasure but a narcotic. One tires oneself out, gets famished, sleeps like the dead, and a day has passed. When you have an opportunity, or are yourself in Moscow, buy me Dickens's *David Copperfield* in English, and send me Sadler's *English Dictionary* which is among my books.

Tolstóy spent more than two and a half years in the Caucasus, and during the last year wrote *Boyhood*, and *Reminiscences of a Billiard-Marker*, besides continuing *The Cossacks*, and beginning *A Landlord's Morning* and *The Wood-Felling*. His dissatisfaction with himself is strongly reflected in *Reminiscences of a Billiard-Marker*.

On 13th September 1853, he notes:

Felt terribly dull this morning. After dinner walked. . . . Then had an idea: *The Reminiscences of a Billiard-Marker*—wonderfully good. Wrote, went to look at the Assembly, and

¹ The Cossack hunter Epíshka, the original of Eróshka, who figures prominently in *The Cossacks*. Nicholas Tolstóy had lodged with him.

again wrote *Reminiscences of a Billiard-Marker*. It seems to me that I am only now beginning to write with ardour.

14th September: Finished a rough draft and in the evening made a fair copy of a sheet. I write with such enthusiasm that it is even distressing. My heart fails and I tremble on taking up the notebook.

15th September: Wrote in the morning and went without dinner. Went for a walk. . . . Wrote from 8 to 11. It went well, but the style is too irregular. I have written more than half of it.

16th September: Am a brick, and work excellently. Have finished!

On the 17th he sent it to Nekrásov saying that he valued it more than *Childhood* or *The Raid*, and that it must be published exactly in its present form. The occurrences in the story are for the most part fiction, but the feelings of repentance, self-dissatisfaction, and almost of despair which it expresses were certainly such as Tolstóy had at that time been experiencing.

The whole story therefore, based on his own experiences at Tiflis, took only four days, but though he had worked at it with such enthusiasm he was not quite satisfied with it when it was finished, for he sent a letter with it to Nekrásov expressing dissatisfaction with its hasty workmanship. It did not appear till more than a year later.

In the Diary he generally uses several names for each of his stories before deciding on the one under which it was published. To avoid confusion, when mentioning them I keep in each case to the title finally adopted.

Not till January 1854 did the long-expected order arrive allowing him to pass the examination (a pure formality) entitling him to become an Ensign. On the 1854 19th he left for home, and travelling with post-horses, reached Yásnaya on 2nd February, where he enjoyed a three weeks' stay with his Aunt Tatiána, his three brothers, and a friend. On this journey, when some sixty miles north of Novocherkássk, he encountered a severe storm, to which we owe *The Snow Storm*, published

a couple of years later, and also much of the storm described in *Master and Man*, some forty years later.

The Russo-Turkish war had now begun in earnest, and as a result of his own application, he received orders to join the army of the Danube.

Apart from his letters, the main source of information concerning this period of his life is his private Diary in which he hastily and briefly jotted down a day-by-day record of his actions, as well as comments on people and events, scraps of information, rules of conduct, bitter self-reproaches for failure to observe them, and general reflections, some of which contrast, while others coincide, with the opinions he expressed in later life. His Diary was intended for himself alone and did not aim at any literary quality. In his last years he expressed the opinion that only certain passages in it were worth publishing, but his literary executors have, not unnaturally, given it to the world, and from it we gather the following information.

His impressions of army life were unpleasant. On 6th January 1853 he had noted:

Stupid people. All—especially my brother—drink, and it is very unpleasant for me. War is such an unjust and evil thing that those who wage it try to stifle their consciences. Am I doing right? Oh God, teach me and forgive me if I am doing wrong.

Writing solely for himself and with the object of restraining himself and amending his ways, he jots down with perfect frankness the records of his gambling, his drunkenness—which was rare—and his dissolute conduct. The notes of this latter have for the most part been suppressed in the published Diary.

13th–16th January 1853. My throat has been aching, but on the 14th I got drunk with Arinévski. . . . Played to-day for trifling amounts, but the bump of play is developing. This is a stupid life.

18th–20th January. My life is extremely disorderly so that I do not recognize myself and I am ashamed to live like this.

24th January–10th February. I have debts. I have lost

more than I have in hand. Have lost my gun to Bálda. My brother is drinking, which distresses me. I will stop playing after to-morrow, and when the campaigning is over will finish with the service.

16th April. God help me! I am now experiencing for the first time an exceedingly sad and depressing feeling—regret at having wasted my youth without pleasure or advantage; and I feel that it has passed. It is time to bid it farewell.

He was then not yet twenty-five.

4th–7th May. . . . I must have a woman. Desire does not give me a moment's peace.

8th–15th May. Have done nothing these seven days. I was at Birdie's and drank, though several times I wished to stop.

15th–22nd May. I had a Cossack girl twice. It is bad! Have let myself deteriorate greatly. Have abandoned the story, and am writing *Boyhood* with the same eagerness with which I wrote *Childhood*. I hope it will be equally good. My debts are now all paid. A brilliant literary career is open to me. I ought to get a commission. I am young and clever. What more, one would think, should I wish for? I must work and exercise self-restraint and may yet be happy.

25th June. . . . Played cards and lost Sultan [a horse]. I was almost taken prisoner, but on this occasion behaved well though I was too effusive. [This is the only mention in the Diary of the incident recounted a few pages back.] On getting back I decided to remain here a month to finish *Childhood*, but I have conducted myself all the week in such a disorderly fashion that I have become very sad and depressed as always happens when one is dissatisfied with oneself. . . . It suddenly became incomprehensible to me how I could have behaved so badly all this time. If I wait for circumstances in which I can easily be virtuous and happy I shall never attain them. I am convinced of this. Girls have led me astray. As far as I can I will try to be useful and industrious and will certainly not act frivolously or do evil. I thank God for this disposition, and I pray: 'Creator, support me.' I have done much evil latterly. . . . I have spent money on trifles and wasted time which I might have used to advantage. I have boasted, disputed, and been angry.

The aim of my life is clear: it is goodness, the duty I owe to my serfs and fellow-countrymen. I owe a duty to the first of these because I own them, and to the second because

possess mind and talent. The latter duty I can fulfil now, but to accomplish the first I must use all available means.

My first thought (long ago) was to draw up for myself rules of life, and now I must return to that. . . . From this evening, in whatever circumstances I may be, I pledge myself to do this every evening. False shame has often hindered me in it. I undertake as far as possible to overcome that. *Be straightforward, even if rude; be frank with everybody, not childishly, unnecessarily frank. Restrain thyself from wine and women.* The pleasure is so brief, so cloudy, and the remorse so great. *Give thyself completely to whatever affair thou undertakest. On receiving a strong impression restrain thyself from action; but having considered it, even though mistakenly, act resolutely.*

To-day I did not finish my prayers, being shy of Alexéev. I wrote little and without reflection. Ate too much, and fell asleep from laziness. Stopped writing on account of Arslan Khan's arrival. I boasted of my connexion with Gorchakóv. Insulted Yanushkévich without apparent reason. Wanted to have women. Boasted a good deal to Gróman, to whom I read the story of Karl Iványch.

On 26th June he notes:

After dinner I went to the Ukrainians, but did not find an opportunity to do a good deed. I disobeyed my conscience. . . . This compulsory continence, it seems to me, gives me no rest and hinders my work, and the sin is slight, since the unnatural position in which fate has placed me excuses it. . . .

After dinner I was idle. Might at least have thought things out, if not written. The wenches hinder me.

Previously, in May 1852, he had written:

Have I talent in comparison with the newer Russian writers? Assuredly not.

But on 12th October, as a contrast to his frequent notes of self-condemnation and self-depreciation we come upon the following recognition of his own latent powers:

Read a work on the literary characterization of genius to-day and this awoke in me a conviction that I am a remarkable man both as regards capacity and eagerness to work. From to-day I will take to it. In the morning write *Boyhood*, and after dinner and in the evening *The Fugitive*.

On 4th-6th October he notes:

Saw Valerián and Másha off yesterday and spent the night with a girl. Am terribly depressed. To-morrow will try to get rid of this depression by activity.

A remark he notes down on 24th October 1853 is this:

When reading a work, especially one that is purely literary, one is chiefly interested by the character of the author which shows itself in it; but there are works in which the author affects a point of view, or changes it several times. The pleasantest books are those in which the author seems, as it were, to try to hide his opinion yet remains true to it wherever it is shown. The most insipid books are those in which the author's point of view changes so often that it is quite lost.

On 26th October he makes an observation which helps to explain why, knowing the Russian peasants as well as he did, and occasionally—as subsequently in *The Power of Darkness*—depicting all the horrors of which they were capable, he yet often presents them as superior to other sections of the community.

He says:

The common people are so far above us by the work they accomplish and by the privations in their lives, that it seems wrong for one of us to write anything bad about them. Evil there is in them, but it is better to say of them, as of the dead, only what is good. Therein lies Turgénev's merit and the deficiency of Grigoróvich in his *Fishers*. Who can be interested in the faults of this miserable but worthy class? There is more of good than of evil in them, and it is also more natural and more generous to seek the causes of the former than of the latter.

This indicates that in this case he swerved from his general rule of looking at things and stating them precisely as they really are, and deliberately allowed sympathy and pity for the peasants to bias his judgment—thus ultimately laying himself open to the reproach of appearing to misunderstand them.

On 31st October 1853 he enters some notable observations:

Read *The Captain's Daughter* and must, alas, admit that Púshkin's prose works are already old-fashioned, not in language but in the way the story is told. . . . The new tendency is for interest in feelings to predominate over interest in the events themselves. Púshkin's stories seem rather bare.

It is strange that we all conceal the fact that one of the main springs of our life is money. As if that were shameful! Take novels, biographies, or stories—they all try to avoid questions of money, whereas in it lies the chief interest of life (or if not the chief, the most continual) and by it a man's character is best shown.

Other comments made the same day are the following:

Self-confidence and aplomb depend not on the brilliance of one's position, but on success in the path one has chosen however insignificant it may be.

I am frequently held up when writing by routine expressions which are not quite correct, true, or poetic, but the fact that one meets them so frequently makes me often write them. These unconsidered, customary expressions, of the insufficiency of which one is aware but which one tolerates because they are so customary, will be to posterity a proof of bad taste. To tolerate such expression means to go with one's age, to correct them means to go in advance of it.

This remark contains the key to the failure of most translators to express Tolstoy's thoughts adequately. He aimed at a direct simplicity of statement such as many writers carefully avoid.

Alternating strangely with his emphatic self-condemnation and punctilious record of failings great and small, we at times come on similarly strenuous disapproval of other people, as well as on recognition of his own intellectual and moral superiority to them. Thus the next entry, a couple of days later, is this:

Almost every time I meet a new man I experience a painful feeling of disappointment. I imagine him to be like myself, and study him applying that standard. Once for all I must become accustomed to the thought that I am an exception and ahead of my age, or that I am one of those incompatible, unadaptable natures that never are satisfied. I must adopt a different standard (lower than my own) and measure people

by it. I shall less often be mistaken. I long deceived myself by imagining I had friends who understood me. Nonsense! I have not yet met a single man who was morally as good as I, or who believed that I do not remember an instance in my life when I was not attracted by what is good and was not ready to sacrifice everything for it.

And the next day he writes:

Am perfectly convinced that I ought to acquire fame, this even causes me to take so little pains: I am convinced that all I need is to wish to work up the material I feel within me.

In November he writes:

There are thoughts the application of which is endlessly varied. Therefore the more general the expression of such thoughts the more food they afford for the mind and heart, and the more profoundly can they be felt.

I am replacing all the prayers I have composed by the Lord's Prayer alone. Any petition I can make to God is expressed more loftily, and in a way more worthy of Him, by the words, 'Thy will be done on earth as in Heaven'.

Another remark the same day is:

I have never made a declaration of love, but recollecting the terrible nonsense which, with a smile of subtle meaning, I talked to people who attracted me, I blush at the very remembrance. The conversations one reads in our fashionable novels *pour tout de bon* [in real earnest] are as like as two peas to what I said. I must realize that idleness and a disorderly life (that is, a life that lacks order) is not merely harmful in practical affairs but may cause most terrible vices and actions on my part, as I have experienced to-day. I am so weak. I must fear idleness and lack of order as I do cards.

About the same time he notes:

I have often been amazed to note how people can find inner satisfaction in their own phrases devoid of thought—just in the mere words—as at a higher stage they find satisfaction in thoughts.

Rules he lays down for himself later that month are:

Every time you feel annoyance and anger, avoid all intercourse with people, especially with those dependant on you.

Avoid the company of people who are fond of drunkenness, and drink neither wine nor vodka.

Avoid the society of women whom you can easily have, and try to exhaust yourself by physical labour when you feel strong desire. I must note down every day the number of times these rules have been infringed.

An indication of his sharp observation of himself is given by another remark the same day:

The tone of a man I am talking with always reacts deplorably on me. If he speaks pompously, so do I; if he mumbles, so do I; if he is stupid, so am I; if he speaks French badly, so do I.

On 1st December he makes a matter-of-fact note on soldiering, which served him later in life as an item in his denunciation of militarism and the army system generally:

Discipline is essential for the existence of a military class, and to create discipline drill is essential. Drill is a way of bringing men to a state of mechanical obedience by means of petty threats, so that the cruellest punishments do not produce such obedience as is obtained by the drill habit.

Detached reflections and observations are jotted down from time to time which indicate the activity of his mind apart from any particular moral or other tendency. For instance, on 16th December one finds him making this remark:

With the shape of a hand—especially a beautiful one—the idea of power is somehow associated. Sometimes when looking at a beautiful hand one thinks: ‘What if I were dependant on that man?’

And farther on, that same day:

As I was being shaved to-day I vividly imagined how a mortal wound inflicted on one already wounded would instantly change his state of mind—from one of despair to resignation.

On a previous occasion he had noted:

Every work to be good must, as Gógol expressed it in his *Farewell Tale*, be sung from its composer’s soul.

The greater part of the Diary however is a brief and hasty record of events. Notes of expenditure, losses at cards, the amount of work he had done that day, and brief notes on incidents, expressions, or encounters he wished to remember, fill most of its pages.¹

Of the two and a half years he spent in the Caucasus, as of his University days, Tolstóy has at different times expressed himself differently. To Birukóv, in 1905, he spoke of it as one of the best times of his life notwithstanding all deflections from his dimly recognized ideals. He added that the latter part of his military career and especially the period of his subsequent literary activity in Petersburg, was a time of gradual moral deterioration, and that not till he returned to Yásnaya Polyána and devoted himself to the peasant children did he again recover and his spirit reassert itself.

In 1903, writing of the four periods of his life, he had spoken of 'the terrible twenty years of coarse dissipation, the service of ambition, vanity, and above all, of lust', which followed after the age of fourteen.

As Tolstóy in his later years judged himself by a very high standard and always expressed himself forcibly, his words give an impression of his conduct that is probably worse than the facts of the case justify.

When he left the Caucasus, he had served for nearly two years as a Cadet, and it was only then that he obtained his commission as an Ensign. On reaching home he noted in his Diary:

Reached Yásnaya Polyána on 2nd February tired and ill. Found affairs in good order, and myself out-of-date, reformed, and aged. . . . On the 6th [February 1854] I was in Túla . . . and heard of my promotion.

While visiting his sister he made a will, and was only able to stay a couple of weeks, before he had to set off to join the Russian army in Turkey.

¹ The above quotations are from *The Private Diary of Leo Tolstóy*, 1853-57, William Heinemann & Co.

CHAPTER IV

THE CRIMEAN WAR

AT twenty-five years of age it fell to Tolstóy's lot to take part in a great European war and extend the range of his experience in a way that considerably affected his subsequent life and writings.

He tells us that his first understanding of war came from Stendhal. To Paul Boyer, Tolstóy once spoke of Stendhal's novels as inimitable works of art, adding, 'I am greatly indebted to him. He taught me to understand war. Re-read the description of the battle of Waterloo in *La Chartreuse de Parme*. Whoever before so described war? Described it, that is, as it is in reality? Do you remember Fabrice riding over the field of battle and understanding "nothing"?'

Tolstóy's brother Nicholas, though fond of war, also disbelieved in the popular romantic view of it and used to say: 'All *that* is embellishment, and in real war there is no embellishment.' 'A little later, in the Crimea,' added Tolstóy in his talk with Boyer, 'I had a grand chance to see with my own eyes that this is so.'

Of the causes that led to the war it need only be said that the rule of the Turks over Christian populations had long kept a dangerous sore open in Europe, and the consequent diplomatic difficulties were complicated by the indefiniteness of two lines in the Treaty of Kainardji which Catherine the Great imposed upon Turkey 1774 in 1774. There was also friction between the Eastern and Western Churches with reference to the custody of the Places in Palestine rendered holy by their traditional connexion with the Prince of Peace. Nicholas I, who had well-nigh drilled all intelligence out of those near him in his Government and his army, was unaccustomed to being thwarted. Dimly conscious of the first faint symptoms of that growth of Liberalism which a few

years later, in the early 'sixties, led to sweeping reforms in Russia, he felt inclined to demonstrate the beneficence of his rule not by allowing changes at home but by inflicting reforms on Turkey. Failing to get his way by diplomatic pressure, he rashly proceeded to occupy the Danubian Principalities as a 'material guarantee' of Turkey's compliance with his demands.

He was opposed by Austria and Prussia as strongly as by England and France, and the pressure exerted by the four Powers sufficed to compel him to withdraw his army from Turkish soil. Thereupon the war, which had as yet been waged only between Russia and Turkey, might well have ended, had not England and France undertaken a quite needless invasion of the Crimea: an enterprise in which Austria and Prussia refused to join. The end did not justify the proceedings, for in spite of success in this war, Napoleon III's dynasty crumbled to dust within twenty years, while within a like period after Palmerston's death Lord Salisbury frankly admitted that we had 'put our money on the wrong horse'. As to Nicholas I, his pride was bitterly mortified by the results of an enterprise which failed of its immediate object and by that very failure hastened the coming of those reforms in Russia against which he had set his face. Even Turkey did not really benefit by being allowed to oppress her subject-races for a couple of generations longer.

It was the influence of Napoleon III, as Kinglake has pointed out, that led England to take part in the war. Having by treachery and murder made himself Emperor of the French, that monarch found himself for a time dangerously isolated from people of good repute. In consultation with Palmerston he decided to subordinate the traditional Eastern policy of his country to that of England if thereby he might succeed in being publicly paraded as the friend and ally of Queen Victoria. As soon as he had secured an alliance with England, by Palmerston's aid and helped by the extraordinary war fever which seized the English nation, he quickly forced

the peacefully disposed Lord Aberdeen down an inclined plane which ultimately landed both nations in a war for which no sufficient motive, justification, or excuse, existed.

Hostilities between Russia and Turkey had begun in October 1853, but France and England did not break off negotiations with Russia till the end of March 1854, the very month in which Tolstóy reached Bucharest on his way to join the army of the Danube.

From there, on 13th March, he wrote to his aunt telling of his journey. The roads after he had passed Khersón, and especially after he had crossed the frontier, were abominable. His journey lasted nine days, and as he wrote to his aunt, he 'arrived almost ill with fatigue'. In his Diary next day he notes: 'Reached Bucharest two days ago . . . for a week past I have been ominously ill.'

On 17th March he mentions his first interview with Gorchakóv:

Prince Gorchakóv was not here. He arrived yesterday, and I have just come from his lodgings. He received me better than I expected—quite as a relation. He embraced me and made me promise to dine at his house every day, and he wants to keep me near him, but this is not yet decided.

Forgive me, dear Aunt, for writing but little to you—I have not yet collected my wits; this large and fine town, all these presentations, the Italian opera, the French theatre, the two young Gorchakóvs who are very fine lads . . . so that I have not spent two hours at home and have not thought of my duties.

On 22nd March he adds: 'I learnt yesterday that I am not to remain with the Prince but am to go to Oltenitza to join my battery.' He stayed with the battery however only for a couple of weeks, and the next mention of the matter in his Diary reads: 'My transfer to the Staff came just when I had quarrelled with the Battery Commander, and it flattered my vanity.'

In May he wrote:

While you are fancying me exposed to all the dangers of

war, I have not yet smelt Turkish powder but am very quietly at Bucharest, strolling about, playing music, and eating ices. In fact all this time, except for two weeks I spent at Oltenitza where I was attached to a battery, and one week passed in journeys in Moldavia, Wallachia and Bessarabia by order of General Serzhputóvski on whose Staff I now am by special appointment, I have been at Bucharest; and to speak frankly, the rather dissipated, quite idle, and very expensive kind of life that I lead here displeases me very much. Formerly it was the service that kept me here, but now for three weeks I have been kept here by a fever contracted during my journey, but from which, thank God, I have for the present recovered sufficiently to be able in two or three days' time to rejoin my General who is in camp near Silistria. Apropos of my General, he appears to be a very fine fellow, and though we know one another very slightly, seems well disposed toward me. What is also agreeable is that his Staff consists for the most part of gentlemen.

We shall find Tolstóy modifying this opinion a little later; but we may note that at this time he was glad to be on the Staff and much preferred to associate with *gens comme il faut*.

By June 1854 the military and political situation was as follows. The Russians had advanced through Moldavia and Wallachia to the Danube, had crossed that river, and were besieging Silistria. Austria, supporting the other great powers, had massed a powerful army on the Turkish frontier, and a glance at the map will show that the Russian army, far removed from its base, was in imminent danger of being cut off by the Austrians, who peremptorily summoned Russia to evacuate the Principalities, and on 14th June concluded a formal alliance with the Porte. These circumstances explain the sudden abandonment of the siege of Silistria mentioned in the following letter, which Tolstóy addressed to his Aunt Tatiána and his brother Nicholas conjointly; though when he wrote it the causes which produced that result were a mystery to him.

I am going to tell you of my recollections of Silistria. I there saw so much that was interesting, poetic, and touching

that the time I passed there will never be effaced from my memory. Our camp was on the farther side of the Danube, i.e. on the right bank, on very high ground amid splendid gardens belonging to Mustafa Pasha, the Governor of Silistria. The view from there was not only magnificent but of the greatest interest to us all. Not to speak of the Danube, its islets and its banks, some occupied by us, others by the Turks, one could see the town, the fortress, and the little forts of Silistria, as on the palm of one's hand. One heard the booming of cannon and musket-shots unceasingly day and night, and with a spy-glass could distinguish the Turkish soldiers. It is true it is a queer sort of pleasure to see people killing one another, yet every evening and every morning I got on to my cart and remained for hours at a time watching, nor was I the only one who did so. The sight was really fine, especially at night. At night my soldiers usually undertake trench-work, and the Turks fling themselves upon them to hinder them; then you ought to see and hear the fusillade! The first night I passed in camp this dreadful noise awoke and frightened me: I thought an assault had begun. I very soon had my horse saddled; but those who had been already some time in camp told me that I had only to keep quiet: that this cannonade and fusillade was an ordinary affair and they jestingly called it 'Allah'. Then I lay down again; but not being able to sleep I amused myself, watch in hand, counting the cannon-shots, and counted 110 reports in a minute. And yet at close quarters all this did not look as terrible as might be supposed. At night when nothing was visible it was a case of who could burn most powder, and with all these thousands of cannon-shots at most some thirty men were killed on each side. . . .

This then was an ordinary performance we had every day, and one in which I took part when sent to the trenches with orders; but we also had extraordinary performances such as the one on the eve of the attack, when a mine of 240 puds [8,600 lb.] of gunpowder was exploded under one of the enemy's bastions. On the morning of that day the Prince had been to the trenches with all his Staff (and as the General to whom I was attached belongs to it, I was there too) to make final arrangements for next day's assault. The plan—too long for me to explain here—was so well arranged, all was so well foreseen, that no one doubted its success. Apropos of this I must tell you further that I am beginning to feel admiration for the Prince [Gorchakov] (for that matter you should hear how the officers and soldiers speak of him: not

only have I never heard him spoken ill of, but he is generally adored).

That morning I saw him under fire for the first time. You should see his tall rather absurd figure, his hands behind his back, his cap on the back of his head, his spectacles, and his way of speaking like a turkey-cock. One could see that he was so preoccupied with the general trend of affairs that the balls and bullets did not exist for him. He exposes himself to danger so simply that one would say he was unconscious of it, and involuntarily one feels more alarmed for him than for oneself, and he gives his orders with such clearness and precision and is at the same time always so affable with everybody. He is a great man, i.e. a capable and honest man, as I understand the word: one who has dedicated his whole life to the service of his country, and not from ambition but for the sake of duty. I will give you a trait of his character connected with the story I had begun to tell you of the assault. After dinner that same day, the mine was sprung, and nearly 600 guns opened fire on the fort we wished to take, and this continued the whole night. It was such a sight and such an emotion as one never forgets. That evening the Prince, amid all the commotion, went to sleep in the trenches that he might personally direct the assault, which was to begin at 3 o'clock the same night.

We were all there, and as usual on the eve of a battle we all pretended not to think of the morrow more than of any other day, and we all, I am sure, at bottom felt our hearts contract a little (and not a little but a great deal) at the thought of the assault. As you know, the time before a fight is the most disagreeable: it is only then that one has time to be afraid, and fear is a most disagreeable feeling. Towards morning, the nearer the moment came the more the feeling diminished, and towards 3 o'clock when we were all expecting to see a shower of rockets let off which was the signal for the attack, I was so well inclined for it that I should have been much disappointed if any one had come to tell me that the attack was not to take place. And there! Just an hour before the time for the attack, an aide-de-camp comes from the Field-Marshal [Paskévich, who for a time took over the supreme command of the army of the Danube] with orders to raise the siege of Silistria! I can say without fear of making a mistake, that this news was received by all, soldiers, officers, and generals, as a real misfortune; the more so as we knew from the spies—who very often came to us from

Silistria and with whom I very often had occasion to speak—that once we had taken this fort (about which none of us felt any doubt) Silistria could not have held out for more than two or three days. Is it not true that if this news was calculated to pain any one it must have been the Prince, who having all through this campaign arranged everything for the best yet saw, in the very middle of the action, the Field-Marshal override him and spoil the business? Having this one chance to repair our reverses by this assault, he received counter-orders from the Field-Marshal at the moment of commencing! Well, the Prince was not put out of temper for a moment. He, who is so impressionable, was on the contrary pleased to be able to avoid that butchery, the responsibility for which he would have had to bear; and during the whole time of the retreat—which he directed personally, not wishing to cross (the Danube) before the last of the soldiers—which took place with remarkable order and exactitude, he was gayer than he has ever been. . . .

Yes, dear Aunt, I should much like your prophecy to come true. What I desire most is to be aide-de-camp to such a man as he, whom I love and esteem from the bottom of my heart. Adieu, dear and kind Aunt. I kiss your hands.

The retreat from Silistria began at the end of June, and the army retired to Bucharest. Here, at an officers' ball, Tolstóy, as he told me himself, seized an opportunity to beg Gorchakov to have him transferred to where service would be most active.

He had been in bad health all this time, and while in Bucharest had to submit to an operation under chloroform, and to undergo treatment for six weeks. On leaving there the army retired to Russia, but delayed by his illness, it was September before Tolstóy left Turkey and reached Kishinév.

His Diary, besides a bare and irregular chronicle of events, shows how his feelings and conduct fluctuated. On 15th June, summarizing his conduct for the previous three months, he says:

I have several times had women, have lied, boasted, and what is most horrible of all, did not behave under fire as I expected of myself.

And on 23rd June:

During the march from Silistria to Moi I rode to Bucharest, gambled, and was obliged to borrow money—a humiliating position for any one and particularly for me. . . . I still do not know what to set to work at, and therefore am doing nothing. I fancy that best of all would be to work at *A Land-lord's Morning*. . . .

3rd July: . . . As soon as I am alone and criticize myself I involuntarily return to my former idea—that of perfecting myself; but the chief mistake, the reason I have been unable to go quietly along that road, was that I confused perfecting oneself with perfection. . . .

One must take oneself as one is and try to correct the corrigible faults. A nature naturally good will lead me to what is good without a notebook, which has all along been my nightmare. Mine is a character which desiring, seeking, and ready for all that is excellent, is for that very reason incapable of being consistently good.

On 7th July he writes in his Diary:

I lack modesty. That is my great defect. What am I? One of four sons of a retired lieutenant-colonel, left orphan at seven years of age in the care of women and strangers, having neither a social nor a learned education, and becoming my own master at seventeen years of age; without any large fortune, without any social position, and chiefly without principles: a man who has mismanaged his affairs to the last degree, has spent the best years of his life aimlessly and without pleasure, and who finally banished himself to the Caucasus to escape from his debts and above all from his habits, and from there, by availing himself of connexions that had existed between his father and the Commander of the army, was transferred to the army of the Danube; a twenty-six-year-old ensign almost without means except his pay (for what means he has he must use to pay his remaining debts), without influential friends, without capacity to live in Society, without knowledge of the service, without practical abilities, but with enormous ambition. Yes, that is my social position. Let us see what I myself am like.

I am ugly, awkward, untidy, and socially uneducated. I am irritable, tiresome to others, not modest, intolerant, and shamefaced as a boy. I am almost an ignoramus. What I know I have somehow learnt by myself, in snatches, discon-

nectedly, unsystematically, and it amounts to very little. I am incontinent, irresolute, inconstant, and stupidly vain and passionate like all characterless people. I am not brave, I am not methodical in life, and am so lazy that idleness has become an almost unconquerable habit of mine.

I am intelligent, but my intelligence has as yet never been thoroughly tested on anything. I have neither practical, social, nor business, ability.

I am honest—that is, I love goodness and have formed a habit of loving it and when I swerve from it I am dissatisfied with myself and return to it with pleasure; but there is something I love more than goodness—fame. I am so ambitious, and so little has that feeling been gratified, that between fame and virtue I am afraid I often might choose the former if the choice presented itself.

Yes—I am not modest, and therefore am proud at heart but shamefaced and shy in society.

That is a grossly unfair estimate of himself, but shows just the sort of eager injustice to any one who fails to reach the high standard he set up, that always characterized him. The account is inaccurate in details. For instance, he was not seven, but nearly nine, when his father died. He had not wrecked his affairs to the extent he suggests. Though his studies had been desultory he had read widely, with a quick understanding and retentive memory. He was master of the Russian, French, and German languages, besides having some knowledge of English, Latin, Arabic, and Turco-Tartar. (Later in life he added a knowledge of Italian, Greek, and Hebrew.) As for not yet having tested his cleverness—he had published stories for which the editor of the best Russian magazine paid him the rate given only to the foremost writers; while his awkwardness in society did not depend on ignorance: on the contrary, he had grown up among people who paid much attention to manners, and he was himself gifted with social tact which became evident as soon as he attained self-confidence. Any defect in his manners must have been merely a result of that nervous shyness natural to highly-strung sensitive natures conscious of powers that society scantily

recognizes. Yet when all is said his description gets home: over-emphatic and unfair, like much of his other writing, it still leaves you in no doubt as to what he meant and hits the real weaknesses of the victim he is attacking.

On 15th August he notes:

I repeat what I had written before: I have three chief defects: (1) lack of character, (2) irritability, and (3) laziness, of which I must cure myself. Will watch these three faults with all possible attention and note them down.

And on 22nd–23rd August the entry runs:

Two marches from Berlad to Aslui. Two days of terrible toothache and complete idleness. Reproaches for these two days (besides inactivity which I might have mastered) consist of irritability [with fellow-officers and his serf Alëshka].

From 9th to 12th September he read *Uncle Tom's Cabin* every day in spite of toothache that was troubling him severely. Read at a moment when the question of the abolition of serfdom was presenting itself seriously to Russian landowners, the book interested him greatly and he sympathized with the feelings it expressed. Other authors read during his service in Turkey and the Crimea were: Goëthe, Alphonse Karr, Lérmontov, Púshkin, Dickens (*Bleak House*), Schiller (*Die Rauber* and other plays, as well as some poems), Ostróvski, George Sand, Heine, Thackeray (*Henry Esmond*, *Vanity Fair*, *Pendennis*), and 'a stupid novel' by Balzac.

On 17th September he notes: 'Have behaved badly. Did nothing in the evening, ran after girls—going out contrary to my intention.'

Early in October he notes: 'Little by little I am becoming steadier,' but on 21st of that month the entry is: 'Have lost all my money at cards.'

Tolstóy, who had been promoted to a sub-lieutenancy in September, in Kishinëv, on 1st November renewed his application for an appointment in the Crimea, and was ordered to Sevastopol, which he reached on the 7th of that month.

The situation there at this time was as follows. The Allies had landed in the Crimea to the north of 1854 Sevastopol on 14th September, n.s., and had defeated the Russian army under Ménshikov on the 20th at Alma. Instead of marching straight into the town, which was almost undefended, they had then gone round and encamped on the south side, where they remained inactive till 17th October, by which time Totleben, an engineer of rare genius, had thrown up earthworks and mounted guns (many of them taken from the Russian ships that were sunk at the entrance to the roadstead). Ménshikov had practically abandoned the town, withdrawing the bulk of his army northward; but the situation was saved by the patriotism of just that section of the Russian forces which had been least exposed to the deadening influence of Nicholas I's militarism—namely, by the officers and men of the fleet. Inspired by the example of the heroic Admiral Kornílov (who lost his life during the siege) they rallied to the defence with remarkable devotion. Their example awoke enthusiasm throughout Russia and compelled Ménshikov to supply reinforcements which enabled the town to hold out for eleven months, despite the great superiority of the Allies in rifles, artillery, and other modern equipments of war.

Tolstóy reached Sevastopol when the defence was already fully organized and when (in spite of the repulse experienced at Inkerman) the garrison had gained confidence in their powers of resistance and had settled down to a dogged defence.

Of the hospitals, in which the wounded saw the limbs of others amputated while waiting their own turn; of the Staff-officers, who managed to amuse themselves pretty well during the siege; of the commissariat-officers flourishing amid the general havoc; as well as of the line officers and the non-commissioned officers and privates upon whom the greatest hardships fell, Tolstóy gives vivid glimpses in the Sketches he wrote during the siege.

A fortnight after his arrival he writes from outside the town to his brother Sergéy, apologizing for not having sent him a letter sooner, and adds:

So much have I learnt, experienced, and felt, this year that I positively do not know what to begin to describe, nor how to describe it as I wish to. . . . Silistria is now ancient history and we have Sevastopol, of which I suppose you all read with beating hearts, and where I was four days ago. Well, how can I tell you all I saw there, and where I went, and what I did, and what the prisoners and wounded French and English say; and *whether it hurts them and hurts very much*,¹ and what heroes our enemies are, especially the English? I will tell all that later at Yásnaya or at Pirogóvo; and you will learn much of it from me through the press. How this will happen I will explain later; but now let me give you an idea of the position of affairs in Sevastopol. The town is besieged from one side, the south, where we had no fortifications when the enemy approached it. Now we have on that side more than 500 heavy guns and several lines of earthworks, positively impregnable. I spent a week in the fortress and to the last day used to lose my way among that labyrinth of batteries as in a wood. More than three weeks ago the enemy advanced his trenches at one place to within 200 yards, but gets no farther. When he makes the smallest advance he is overwhelmed with a hailstorm of shot and shell.

The spirit of the army is beyond all description. In the times of ancient Greece there was not such heroism. Kornílov making the round of the troops, instead of greeting them with 'Good health to you, lads!' says: 'If you have to die, lads, will you die?' and the troops shout, 'We'll die, Your Excellency! Hurrah!' and they do not say it for effect. On every face one saw that it was not jest but earnest, and 22,000 men have already fulfilled that promise.

A wounded soldier, almost dying, told me how they captured the 24th French Battery but were not reinforced; and he wept aloud. A company of Marines nearly mutinied because they were to be withdrawn from batteries in which they had been exposed to shellfire for thirty days. The soldiers extract the fuses from the shells that fall. Women carry water to the bastions for the soldiers. Many are killed and

¹ This refers to a family joke, and occurs in other letters home apropos of people who were killed or wounded.

wounded. The priests with their crosses go to the bastions and read prayers under fire. In one brigade, the 24th, more than 160 wounded men would not leave the front. It is a wonderful time! Now however, after the 24th [24th October, o.s.=5th November, n.s.—the battle of Inkerman] we have quieted down; it has become splendid in Sevastopol. The enemy hardly fires and all are convinced that he will not take the town; and it is really impossible. . . . I have not yet succeeded in being in action even once, but thank God that I have seen these people live in this glorious time. The bombardment of the 5th [17th October, n.s., when the first attack on Sevastopol, a very fierce one, took place] remains the most brilliant and glorious feat not only in the history of Russia, but in the history of the world. More than 1,500 cannon were in action for two days against the town and not only did not cause it to capitulate, but did not silence one two-hundredth part of our batteries. Though I suppose this campaign is unfavourably regarded in Russia, our descendants will place it above all others; do not forget that we, with equal or even inferior forces and armed only with bayonets and with the worst troops in the Russian army (such as the 6th corps) are fighting a more numerous enemy aided by a fleet, armed with 3,000 cannon, excellently supplied with rifles, and with their best troops. I do not even speak of the superiority of their Generals.

Only our army could hold its ground and conquer (we shall yet conquer, of that I am convinced) under such circumstances. You should see the French and English prisoners (especially the latter): they are each one better than the other—morally and physically fine fellows. The Cossacks say it is even a pity to cut them down; and alongside of them you should see some Chasseurs or others of ours: small, lousy, and shrivelled up.

Now I will tell you how you will get printed news from me of the deeds of these lousy and shrivelled heroes. In our artillery Staff, which is composed, as I think I wrote you, of very decent and nice fellows, the idea has arisen of publishing a war periodical [a weekly paper], the aim of which would be to maintain a good spirit in the army. It would be a cheap paper (three rubles a year) and a popular one, that the soldiers may read it. We drew up a plan of the paper and submitted it to the Prince. He was very pleased with the idea and submitted the project and a sample number, which we also drew up, for the Emperor's approval. The money for its publica-

tion will be advanced by myself and by Stolýpin.¹ I am chosen editor together with a certain Konstantínov who . . . has had experience in such matters.

In the paper, we should publish descriptions of battles—not such dull ones and not such inaccurate ones as are given in other papers—courageous deeds, biographies, and obituary notices of worthy, and especially of unknown men; military stories, soldiers' songs, and popular articles on engineering and artillery, &c. This plan pleases me very much: in the first place I like the work; and secondly, I hope the paper will be useful and not too bad. It is as yet merely a project until we know the Emperor's reply, about which I confess I have my fears. In the specimen number sent to Petersburg we rashly inserted two articles, one by me and one by Rostóvtsev, not quite orthodox. For this business I want 1,500 rubles, which I have asked Valerián to send me.

I, thank God, am well, and live happily and pleasantly since I returned from Turkey. In general my army service divides up into two periods: beyond the frontier—horrid: I was ill, poor, and lonely. This side of the frontier—I am well and have good friends, though I am still poor: money simply runs away.

As to writing, I do not write; but, as Auntie teases me by saying, 'I test myself'. One thing disquiets me: it is that for four years now I have lived without female society; and I may become quite coarse and unsuited for family life which I so enjoy.

During the year then closing he worked at *Youth and The Wood-Felling: A Cadet's Story*, but his army service and the frequent moves from place to place hindered his writing, and neither of these stories was completed in 1854.

On 6th January he wrote to his Aunt:

There is no more fighting in the open country because of the winter which is extraordinarily rigorous particularly just now; but the siege still goes on. . . . I think I have mentioned an occupation I had in view which promised very well—as I may say now that it is settled. I had the idea of starting a military newspaper. This project, at which I worked with the co-

¹ Father of P. A. Stolýpin, who became Premier of Russia in 1906.

operation of many very distinguished men, was approved by the Prince and submitted to His Majesty for his consent, but he has refused.

This disappointment has, I confess, distressed me greatly and has much altered my plans. If God wills that the Crimean campaign should end well, and if I do not receive an appointment that satisfies me, and if there is no war in Russia, I shall leave the army and go to the Military Academy in Petersburg. I have formed this plan, (1) because I do not want to abandon literature, at which it is impossible to work amid this camp life; (2) because it seems to me that I am becoming ambitious, but I want to do some good; and to do it one must be something more than a Sub-Lieutenant, and (3) because I shall see you all, and all my friends.

1855 On 23rd January 1855 he notes in his Diary:

I have been to Sevastopol, received money, talked with Totleben, visited the Fourth Bastion, and played cards. Am greatly disgusted with myself.

The next entry, on 28th January, is:

Have played *stoss* for two days and two nights. The result is evident—the loss of the house at Yásnaya Polyána. It seems useless to write: am so disgusted with myself that I should like to forget my own existence.

While he was in the Caucasus he had written to his brother to sell the big house at Yásnaya Polyána, and it is not clear whether the sale was then effected or not, and whether Tolstóy here merely means that he had lost as much as the house had fetched.

On 12th February in a mood of depression, he writes:

Time, the time of youth, visions, thoughts, is all being lost, leaving no trace. I do not live, but waste my years. My losses compel me to bethink myself a little.

On 11th March he noted in his Diary:

Gorchakov has arrived with the whole Staff; I have been to see him and was well received, but of a transfer to the Staff, which I have long desired, there is no news. I will not ask for it, but will wait for him to do it of his own accord or for my aunt to write a letter.

On 11th April the entry is:

Fourth Bastion.¹ Have written very, very little of *Youth* or *Sevastopol* during these days. My cold and feverish condition were the cause of this. Besides that, I am vexed (especially now when I am ill) that it does not occur to anybody that I am good for anything except *chair à canon* [cannon-fodder], and of the most useless kind. Feel inclined to fall in love with a nurse I saw at the Ambulance.

In May he wrote again to his brother, recapitulating what had happened during the previous six months:

From Kishinév on 1st November I petitioned to be sent to the Crimea, partly in order to see this war and partly to break away from Serzhputóvski's Staff which I did not like, but most of all from patriotism, of which at that time, I confess, I had a bad attack. I did not ask for any special appointment, but left it to those in authority to dispose of my fate. In the Crimea I was appointed to a battery in Sevastopol itself, where I passed a month very pleasantly amid simple, good companions, who are specially good in time of real war and danger. In December our battery was removed to Simferópol and there I spent six weeks in a squire's comfortable house, riding into Simferópol to dance and play the piano with young ladies, and in hunting wild goats on the Chatyrdág [the highest point of the chain of mountains running across the southern part of the Crimea] in company with officials. In January there was a fresh shuffling of officers and I was removed to a battery encamped on the banks of the Belbék, seven miles from Sevastopol. There I got into hot water: the nastiest set of officers in the battery; a commander who, though good-hearted, was violent and coarse; no comforts, and it was cold in the earth huts. Not a single book, nor a single man with whom one could talk; and there I received the 1,500 rubles for the newspaper, sanction for which had already been refused; and there I lost 2,500 rubles, and thereby proved to all the world that I am still an empty fellow; and though the previous circumstances may be taken into account in mitigation, the case is still a very, very bad

¹ The Fourth Bastion to which Tolstóy was sent was the most southern and the most dangerous of the defences of Sevastopol. English writers call it the Flagstaff Bastion.

one. In March it became warmer, and a good fellow, an excellent man, Bronévski, joined the battery. I began to recover myself; and on 1st April, at the very time of the bombardment, the battery was moved to Sevastopol and I quite recovered myself. There, till 15th May, I was in serious danger, i. e. for four days at a time, at intervals of eight days, I was in charge of a battery in the Fourth Bastion; but it was spring and the weather was excellent, there was abundance of impressions and of people, all the comforts of life, and we formed a capital circle of decent fellows; so that those six weeks will remain among my pleasantest recollections. On 15th May Gorchakov, or the Commander of the Artillery, took it into his head to entrust me with the formation and command of a mountain platoon at Belbék, 14 miles from Sevastopol, with which arrangement I am up to now extremely well satisfied in many respects.

Apparently it *had* occurred to some one that Tolstóy might be used better than as food for cannon. It has been said—I myself formerly accepted and repeated the statement—that this transfer to Belbék was the result of an order given by Alexander II (Nicholas I died on 2nd March, n.s.) after reading *Sevastopol in December* to ‘take care of the life of that young man’. It is true that Alexander was impressed by that sketch, for he gave instructions to have it translated into French; but as the transfer to Belbék was made on 15th May and the sketch only appeared in the June number of the *Contemporary* it is doubtful whether the transfer was made at the Emperor’s instigation.

A vivid description of what going to the Fourth Bastion and living in it was like is given in *Sevastopol in December 1854*, and men who were in the trenches in Flanders during the Great War sixty years later tell me that Tolstóy’s description very closely resembles their own experiences, both of the kind of warfare and of the feelings of those who fought.

On 12th April, during his sojourn in the Fourth Bastion, Tolstóy writes in his Diary:

The same Fourth Bastion, which I am beginning to like very much. Am writing a good deal. To-day have finished

Sevastopol in December and written a little of *Youth*. The constant charm of danger, observing the soldiers with whom I am living, the sailors, and the methods of war, is so pleasant that I do not want to leave here, especially as I should like to be present at the assault, if there is to be one.

Two days later he writes:

O Lord, I thank Thee for Thy continual protection. How surely Thou leadest me to what is good, and how insignificant a creature should I be if Thou shouldst abandon me! Leave me not, O Lord, help me, not for the satisfaction of my insignificant aims but for the eternal, great, and unknown aim of existence of which I am conscious.

Tolstóy had by now reached the conclusion that the influence exercised by the Staff on the conduct of a war is usually pernicious. It is a view merely indicated in his subsequent novels, but which fitted into a general view of life he ultimately arrived at and that must be dealt with later. For the moment let it suffice to mention that whereas he shows a keen appreciation of Admiral Kornílov's achievement in rousing the spirit of the garrison, he nowhere praises Totleben's achievement in organizing the defence of the town and improvising that 'labyrinth of batteries' in which Tolstóy used constantly to lose his way. He says, for instance:

Now you have seen the defenders of Sevastopol. . . . The principal joyous thought you have brought away is a conviction of the strength of the Russian people; and this conviction you gained, not by looking at all these traverses, breastworks, cunningly interlaced trenches, mines, and cannon, one on top of another, of which you could make nothing; but from the eyes, words and actions—in short, from seeing what is called the 'spirit' of the defenders of Sevastopol.

To everything a man can do off his own bat and by his own effort Tolstóy was keenly alive and sympathetic; but when it comes to a complex co-ordinated plan, involving the subordination of many parts of one whole, he was suspicious and even hostile. Had he remained a subordinate officer, or even a novelist, it would not have been necessary to note this peculiarity; but that

we may understand his later teachings it is important to see all the roots of feeling from which they grew, and this one among the rest.

To get on however with our tale. One evening while Tolstóy was sitting with the adjutants of Count Osten-Sáken, commander of the garrison, Prince S. S. Urúsov, a brave officer and the best Russian chess-player of his day, who was a friend of Tolstóy entered the room and wished to speak to the General. An adjutant took him to Osten-Sáken's room, and ten minutes later Urúsov passed out again, looking very glum. After he had gone, the adjutant explained that Urúsov had come to suggest that a challenge should be sent to the English to play a game of chess for the foremost trench in front of the Fifth Bastion: a trench that had changed hands several times and had already cost some hundreds of lives. Osten-Sáken had naturally refused to issue the challenge.

Tolstóy suffered a good deal off and on from ill health. For instance he notes, in 1855, in his Diary:

30th July: Rode on horseback; dined at Stolýpin's, did absolutely nothing. My health is bad. Fever and headaches. Prepared for departure. Idleness.

31st July. Health seems bad, feverishness and terrible weakness. Because of this I have done nothing.

On 16th August, n.s., Tolstóy took part in the battle of the Chérnaya (Black River) in which the Sardinian contingent, which had arrived in May to reinforce the Allies, highly distinguished itself. This last attempt to relieve Sevastopol failed as its forerunners had done. Three days later Tolstóy wrote to his brother saying that he had not been hurt, and that 'I did nothing, as my mountain artillery was not called on to fire'.

After this battle the officers of the battery were sitting round a camp-fire. One of them suggested that they should compose a song, as had previously been done by some Staff officers apropos of the battle of Alma. Each in turn was to make up a verse. But the attempt was unsuccessful and the verses they composed were worth-

less. Next day Tolstóy read them some he had composed, and these were received with delight by his fellow-officers who began singing them, and before long they were to be heard throughout the army and copies of them found their way all over Russia.

There has been some confusion about these verses, written by Tolstóy, and others previously written about the battle of Alma—in the composition of which he had little or no part for he only reached Sevastopol after that battle had been fought. In the account given in the first edition of this book I was led astray by following what seemed to be an authoritative account of the matter given in the *Rússkaya Stariná*, and I quoted the Alma verses instead of the following, which are those that refer to the fight Tolstóy took part in at the river Chérnaya. The translation is my wife's.

'Twas in August, on the Fourth
That the devil sent us forth
That there hill to take.

General Baron Vrévski, he,
- Gorchakóv would not let be,
Being rather screwed.

'Prince, if you don't take that hill,
'Twixt us two 'twill make ill-will;
I'll denounce you soon.'

So they all in Council met,
Each big-wig and epaulet,
E'en Bekók of the police,

Police-Master of the place,
Could not think in this here case
What he'd better say.

So they pondered, racked their brains,
Drew up plans with care and pains
On a large white sheet.

All so smooth without a blot—
But some ravines they clean forgot
Which we had to cross!

Princes, Counts, and big-wigs start—
The topographers take part—
'Gainst this great redoubt.

Says the Prince: 'You go, Liprandé!'
But Liprandé: 'Wait, *attendez*;
Muttering, 'Think I'd go?

'Any fool will do; you had
Better send out there Reyád,
And let me look on.'

Reyád, not troubling of his pate,
To the bridge then led us straight:
'Now then, shout "Hurrah!"'

'Wait,' then Martinau did pray,
'Till r'inforcements come our way.'
—'No, we'd better go!'

So 'Hurrah' we all did shout—
I don't know how't came about—
No supports were sent!

Bélovtsév—our General—took
And a banner fiercely shook—
Tho' it didn't suit his face;

In full Regiments started we,
But in all some Comp'nies three
Reached Fedúkin's heights.

Of the French there were a lot—
Three times more than we had got,
And r'inforcements—heaps!

We a column to our aid
Did expect, and signals made
To the garrison.

But while General—you know who—
With long prayers made great ado
We had to retreat. . . .

That same week he notes in his Diary:

Went to Bakhchisaráy, bought a horse, fornicated, and generally behaved badly, not to mention my laziness which I have still not mastered. My health is not good. . . .

The end of the siege was now approaching, and on 27th August, o.s. [8th September, n.s.] Tolstóy, having volunteered for service in Sevastopol, reached the Star Fort on the North Side of the Roadstead just in time to witness the capture of the Malákhov by the French, as he has described in *Sevastopol in August*.

On the north side of the roadstead at the Star Fort, near noon, two sailors stood on the 'telegraph' mound; one of them, an officer, was looking at Sevastopol through the fixed telescope. Another officer accompanied by a Cossack, had just ridden up to join him at the big Signal-post. . . . Along the whole line of fortifications but especially on the high ground on the left side, appeared, several at a time, with lightnings that at times flashed bright even in the noonday sun, puffs of thick, dense, white smoke, that grew, taking various shapes and appearing darker against the sky. These clouds, showing now here now there, appeared on the hills, on the enemy's batteries, in the town, and high up in the sky. The reports of explosions never ceased, but rolled together and rent the air.

Towards noon the puffs appeared more and more rarely and the air vibrated less with the booming.

'I say, the Second Bastion does not reply at all now!' said the officer on horseback; 'it is quite knocked to pieces. Terrible!'

'Yes, and the Malákhov, too, sends hardly one shot to three of theirs,' said he who was looking through the telescope. 'Their silence provokes me! They are shooting straight into the Kornílov Battery and it does not reply.'

'But look there! I told you that they always cease the bombardment about noon. It's the same to-day. Come, let's go to lunch; they'll be waiting for us already. What's the good of looking?'

'Wait a bit!' answered the one who had possession of the telescope, looking very eagerly towards Sevastopol.

'What is it? What?'

'A movement in the entrenchments, thick columns advancing.'

'Yes! They can be seen even without a glass, marching in columns. The alarm must be given,' said the seaman.

'Look! Look! They've left the trenches!'

And, really, with the naked eye one could see what looked

like dark spots moving down the hill from the French batteries across the valley to the bastions. In front of these spots dark stripes were already visibly approaching our line. On the bastions white cloudlets burst in succession as if chasing one another. The wind brought a sound of rapid small-arm firing, like the beating of rain against a window. The dark stripes were moving in the midst of the smoke and came nearer and nearer. The sounds of firing, growing stronger and stronger, mingled in a prolonged, rumbling peal. Puffs of smoke rose more and more often, spread rapidly along the line, and at last formed one lilac cloud (dotted here and there with little faint lights and black spots) which kept curling and uncurling; and all the sounds blent into one tremendous clatter.

‘An assault!’ said the naval officer, turning pale and letting the seaman look through the telescope.

Cossacks galloped along the road, some officers rode by, the Commander-in-Chief passed in a carriage with his suite. Every face showed painful excitement and expectation.

‘It’s impossible they can have taken it,’ said the mounted officer.

‘By God, a standard! . . . Look! look!’ said the other, panting, and he walked away from the telescope: ‘A French standard on the Malákhov!’

The loss of the Malákhov rendered the further defence of the town impossible, and the following night the Russians set fire to it and blew up and destroyed such munitions of war as they could not remove from the bastions. Tolstóy was deputed to clear the Fifth and Sixth Bastions before they were abandoned to the Allies. When telling me of this he added: ‘The non-commissioned officers could have done the work just as well without me.’ While the destruction was proceeding the Russian forces crossed the roadstead by a pontoon bridge which had been constructed during the siege. The town south of the roadstead was abandoned and the defenders established themselves on the north side, where they remained till peace was concluded in February 1856.

To his Auntie Tatiána Tolstóy wrote on 4th September:

On the 27th a great and famous action occurred in Sevastopol. I had the fortune and misfortune to arrive at the town

just on the day of the attack, so that I was present and even took some part in the action as a volunteer. Do not be alarmed: I was hardly in any danger. The 28th, my birthday, was for the second time in my life a memorable and mournful day: the first time, fourteen years ago, it was the death of Aunt Alexándra Ilínishna; now it is the fall of Sevastopol. I wept when I saw the town wrapped in flames and French standards on our Bastions; and in general in many respects it was a very sorrowful day.

The last entry in his Diary before leaving the Crimea was on 27th October:

Yesterday lost 500 rubles. . . . Terrible idleness. It is essential for me to get out of this rut of military life which harms me.

Some notes made in September by an artillery Colonel, P. N. Glébov, who was attached to Head-quarters, gives us an idea of how Tolstóy was there regarded.

Count Tolstóy, a Sub-Lieutenant of artillery, is in command of two mountain batteries, but he himself roams anywhere he pleases. On 4th August [i.e. at the battle of the Chérnaya] he attached himself to me, but I could not make use of his pistols [an ironical reference to his small mountain guns] in the affair, as I was holding the position with the battery guns; on 27th August [i.e. the day the Malákhov was captured by the French] he again applied to me, but this time without his guns, so owing to the shortage of officers I was able to entrust him with the command of five battery guns. This at any rate shows that Tolstóy is eager to smell powder, but only fitfully, as an irregular, avoiding the difficulties and hardships incidental to war. He travels about to different places like a tourist, but as soon as he hears firing, he at once appears on the field of battle. When it is over, he is off again at his own discretion wherever fancy takes him. Not every one is able to make war in so agreeable a manner. It is also said of him that for lack of something to do he makes songlets, and that the song about the 4th August is his composition.

After the retreat, Tolstóy was given the task of collating the twenty or more reports of the action from the Artillery Commanders. This experience of how war is recorded helped to produce in him the supreme contempt

for detailed military histories which he often expressed in later years. He says:

I regret that I did not keep a copy of those reports. They were an excellent example of that naïve, unavoidable kind of military falsehood, out of which descriptions are compiled. I think many of those comrades of mine who drew up those reports will laugh on reading these lines, remembering how, by order of their Commander, they wrote what they could not know.

Carrying the report he had himself prepared, Tolstóy was sent as courier to Petersburg at the end of October, and this terminated his personal experience of war. He had added a year and a half of service in Turkey and the Crimea to his two years' service in the Caucasus, but his hopes of advancement in the army had come to nothing, partly in consequence of the satirical soldiers' song already referred to.

Another matter which did him no good in the eyes of his superiors was his refusal to fall in with a reprehensible practice which by long usage had become as well established as, for instance, among ourselves, was the purchase of peerages by contributions to Party funds.

Those in command of batteries used to pay for various things, such as shoes for the horses, medicine, office expenses, and certain extras for the soldiers for which no official allowance was made, and money for this was obtained by retaining, and not accounting for, surpluses which arose from the fact that the allowance issued for the purchase of stores and fodder was in excess of what was required for the purpose. The difference between the actual and estimated cost supplied a revenue different commanders used in different ways. Some spent it all for the good of the service though in a manner not shown in the accounts; others made private profit of it. Tolstóy, during his command of a battery, refused to keep any balance of cash and insisted on showing it in the accounts. He hereby evoked the displeasure of less scrupulous commanders and called down upon himself a rebuke from General Kryzhanóvski, who did not

consider that it lay with a sub-lieutenant in temporary command to upset so well-established a custom.

The following entries in his Diary show that Tolstóy did not reach his decision to forgo this source of revenue without a struggle. On 19th May he notes:

On the 15th I was appointed commander of a mountain battery and came into camp at Belbék, 20 versts from Sevastopol. There is a lot to do. I wish to attend to the provisioning myself, and I see how easy it is to steal—so easy that it is impossible not to steal. I have many plans about this stealing, but what the result will be I do not know.

2nd June: It is abominable that I am undecided about the provisioning.

28th June: Try each month to set 200 rubles aside, partly from the provision and forage money and partly from the money for my writings, and write to the village [Yásnaya] that they should pay my debts to Z, to D, to C, and so on, and in any case I must myself collect 1,500 rubles by the New Year.

8th July: As to the surplus remaining from my command of the battery, I will certainly take it and not speak of it to any one. If I am asked I will say that I took it, as I know it to be honest.

12th July: Have . . . been solely occupied with the new chests and have realized that there will be no Treasury money left over. Am even surprised that the thought should have occurred to me of taking any, even though it was a quite unneeded surplus. Am very glad I have devised these chests, which will cost over 100 rubles.

From his letters and memoirs we get clear indications of Tolstóy's feelings towards his brother officers; his distaste for the common run of them, and his liking for those of a better sort. Here and there in memoirs and magazine articles by other people, one finds records of the impression he in turn produced on his companions. One of them relates:

How Tolstóy woke us all up in those hard times of war, with his stories and his hastily composed couplets! He was really the soul of our battery. When he was with us we did not notice how time flew, and there was no end to the general gaiety. . . . When the Count was away, when he trotted off

to Simferópol, we all hung our heads. He would vanish for one, two, or three, days. . . . At last he would return—the very picture of a prodigal son! Sombre, worn out, and dissatisfied with himself. . . . Then he would take me aside, quite apart, and would begin his confessions. He would tell me all: how he had caroused, gambled, and where he had spent his days and nights; and all the time, if you will believe me, he would condemn himself and suffer as though he were a real criminal. He was so distressed that it was pitiful to see him. That's the sort of man he was. In a word, a queer fellow, and to tell the truth one I could not quite understand. He was however a rare comrade, a most honourable fellow, and a man one can never forget!

On 5th March 1855 (old style) when he was just recovering from that fit of depression at Belbék which, as already mentioned, drove him to gamble, he writes in his Diary:

A conversation about Divinity and Faith has suggested to me a great, a stupendous idea, to the realization of which I feel capable of devoting my life. That idea is the founding of a new religion corresponding to the present state of mankind: the religion of Christ but purged of dogmas and mysticism—a practical religion, not promising future bliss but giving bliss on earth. I understand that to accomplish this the conscious labour of generations will be needed. One generation will bequeath the idea to the next, and some day fanaticism or reason will accomplish it. *Deliberately* to promote the union of mankind by religion is the basic thought which I hope will dominate me.

In that passage we have, quite clearly stated before he was twenty-seven, the main idea which actuated Tolstóy from the age of fifty onwards. Already by the literary work he accomplished amid the bustle and excitement of the siege he was half-consciously moving in the direction that attracted him.

The entries in his Diary plainly show the vacillations that went on in his mind from day to day and from month to month. On 22nd June, when he had had encouraging news of the success of his first Sevastopol sketch, the entry runs: 'Just fancy! I have nothing to reproach

myself with for the whole day!' And two days later: 'Worked all day and cannot reproach myself with anything. Hurrah!'

On 25th July the entry is:

Do not know by what train of thoughts, or simply in consequence of what memories, while talking to Khonzini to-day I returned to my former view of life, the aim of which is welfare, and the ideal—virtue. This return was exceedingly pleasant to me and I was horrified at how remote I have been from that view, and how material and bad my recent thoughts and rules have been. . . . Yes, military society has cast its shadow on me and stained me.

But on 28th September he writes:

I positively could not write two sheets, but might have written a little, and I was not continent; that however deliberately, and I do actually feel better.

The alleged purposes of the Crimean War were lost sight of before it ended, and the conditions of the Treaty of Peace which forbade Russia to fortify Sevastopol and limited her Black Sea navy, were repudiated by her in 1871 when France and Prussia were fighting one another, and it was not worth England's while to object. But a valuable and permanent result of the war remains in the *Sevastopol* sketches, part of which Tolstóy had written while serving in the dangerous Fourth Bastion.

The war had hindered his literary activity, and not till he was stationed at Belbék, in June 1855, did he finish the third revision of *The Wood-Felling*, which had been begun before he left the Caucasus in 1853. This he dedicated to Turgénev whose style had influenced him when writing it. It appeared in the August number of the *Contemporary*, 1855. *Youth*, on which he had worked at the same time, was not completed till later. He was also at this time forming plans for *A Landlord's Morning* which were only very partially carried out, but which indicate his attitude towards the emancipation of the serfs.

On 1st August he notes:

The plan occurred to me yet more clearly than before of making four periods of *A Landlord's Morning*, and I will myself be that hero in Khabárovka. The chief idea of the story must be the impossibility in our times of a decent life for an educated landowner with slavery. All its wretchedness should be shown and the means of correcting it indicated.

Sevastopol in December 1854 and *Sevastopol in May 1855* were written during the siege, and *Sevastopol in August 1855* was begun immediately after the town had fallen, but while the war still continued. These sketches mark a phase of his career, and are highly characteristic in the change from the patriotism of the first article to the condemnation of war in the second, where it is depicted in its naked ugliness and stripped of romanticism as no writer, not even Stendhal, had done before. These sketches were precursors of the revolt against the hypnotic fascination of war which had been habitually presented as a grand, heroic, beautiful, and ennobling pursuit. From the time of the *Sevastopol* sketches the other side of the picture has more and more frequently been shown, and men's minds have been changed to such a degree that a League of Nations has become possible and finds support, which definitely aims at the abolition of war, that previously was regarded as one of the chief aims of man's existence.

The facts are remarkable. Tolstóy had volunteered for service in Sevastopol under the influence of an 'attack of patriotism', and an entry in his Diary on 6th July 1854 indicates his ambition:

However often I tell myself that I am not ambitious, and try as I will to be sincere about it, *le bout de l'oreille se montre malgré moi* [a proverb which may perhaps be translated: The cloven hoof shows up in spite of me]. It was unpleasant to me to learn to-day that Ósip Serzhputóvski . . . has been mentioned to the Emperor. . . .

He chafed against the slowness of his advancement in the service and at its not occurring to any one that he was 'good for anything except *chair à canon* of the most useless kind'. He wrote *Sevastopol in December 1854* in

a genuinely patriotic mood and it was received by the public with enthusiasm, and read with approval by the Emperor who had just succeeded to the throne, and who had it translated into French. Turgénev wrote to Panáev:

Tolstóy's article about Sevastopol is wonderful! Tears came into my eyes as I read it, and I shouted, Hurrah! I am greatly flattered by his wish to dedicate his new tale to me. . . . Here his article has produced a general furore.

Tolstóy, meanwhile, had written *Sevastopol in May*, which besides showing the meaner aspects of war frankly expresses moral condemnation of it. The following sequence of dates deserves attention. On 15th June he notes: 'Received a letter and my article from Panáev. Am flattered that it has been read by the Emperor,' but four days later he begins his second sketch and, conscious that it might get him into trouble, notes, on 23rd June, that he had revised the whole 'from the point of view of the Censor'.

On 28th of that month he writes:

It seems that I am really beginning to acquire a reputation in Petersburg. The Emperor has ordered *Sevastopol in December* to be translated into French.

Yet on 4th July he writes to Panáev (co-editor of the *Contemporary*) saying:

I am sending you the Sevastopol article [*Sevastopol in May*]. Though I am convinced that it is incomparably better than the first one, I am sure it will not please. I am even afraid it will not be allowed at all.

Next day he notes: 'I have only now reached the period of real temptation by vanity. I could gain much in life if I were willing to work without conviction,' and six days later (on 11th July) he notes: 'Have only to-day sent off *Sevastopol in May*'—that is to say, that, after holding it back for a week, he sent off an article he knew would go right against the grain with the public, with the publishers' interests, with the Emperor, and with the whole stream of patriotic sentiment the war had

aroused. Nekrásov on receiving it, writing to Turgénev says: 'Tolstóy has sent a *Sevastopol* article, but it is so full of sober and deep truth that it is useless to think of publishing it.' And his co-editor, Panáev, wrote to Tolstóy:

It is all excellent, all is sketched in masterfully, but . . . at the present time, when the scene of its action is almost sacred ground especially to those who are far away from it—the story may even produce a very unpleasant impression.

The attempt to publish it was made, however, and with a few alterations the Censor passed it, and it was already in print in the August number of the *Contemporary*, ready for publication, when it was recalled for submission to the President of the Censor's Committee, who expressed astonishment that the editor had ever ventured to submit it and that the Censor should have passed it. His decision was that 'the article is forbidden on account of its ridicule of our brave officers—the brave defenders of Sevastopol'. Eventually he changed his mind and, after himself making considerable alterations in the article, allowed its publication. His alterations were so serious that Panáev did not wish to publish the article at all, but was told that he must. 'There was no help for it,' he writes to Tolstóy, 'and your mutilated article will appear in the September number, but without the initials L. N. T., which I could not bear to see attached to it after that. . . .'

Nekrásov wrote to him in September saying:

The revolting mutilation of your article quite upset me. Even now I cannot think of it without regret and rage. Your work will, of course, not be lost . . . it will always remain as proof of a strength able to utter such profound and sober truth under circumstances amid which few men would have retained it. It is just what Russian society now needs: the truth—the truth, of which since Gógol's death so little has remained in Russian literature. You are right to value that side of your gifts most of all. Truth—in such form as you have introduced it into our literature—is something completely new among us. I do not know another writer of to-day who so

compels the reader to love him and sympathize heartily with him, as he to whom I now write; and I only fear lest time, the nastiness of life, and the deafness and dumbness that surround us, should do to you what it has done to most of us, and kill the energy without which there can be no writer—none at least such as Russia needs. . . .

On the 17th of that month Tolstóy notes in his Diary:

Yesterday I received news that *Sevastopol in May* has been distorted and printed. It seems that I am under the strict observation of the Blues [the gendarmes] on account of my articles. I wish however that Russia always had such moral writers; but I never can be a sugary one, nor can I ever write 'from the empty into the void' [a familiar Russian saying] without ideas, and above all without aim. Despite a first moment of anger in which I promised myself never again to take pen in hand, my chief and sole activity, dominating all other tendencies and occupations, must be literature. My goal is literary fame and the good I can accomplish by my writings. To-morrow I am going to Koroléz and will tender my resignation.

It is worth while to note the very different conclusions at which Kinglake the historian of this war, and Tolstóy its novelist, arrived. Kinglake holds the war to have been unnecessary, and attributes it chiefly to the unscrupulous ambition of Napoleon III; yet he blames the Peace Party very severely for protesting against it, for had they not done so, he thinks, Nicholas would not have dared to act aggressively. Kinglake feels that negotiations between rulers and diplomatists are important and that anything that prevents a Government from speaking with authority makes for confusion and disaster.

Tolstóy, on the other hand (if I may anticipate and speak of conclusions not definitely expressed by him till much later), regards all war and preparation for war as immoral, and wishes this conviction to become so strong and so general as to render it impossible for any future Napoleon to plunge five nations into war to gratify his own ambition.

Kinglake understands things as they are and knows

how easy it is to do harm with good intentions, but is somewhat blind to the trend of human progress and as to what the aim before us should be. Tolstóy, on the contrary, is chiefly concerned about the ultimate aim and about the state of mind of the individual. The actual working of our political system and international relations are things he ignores. The English writer sees clearly what is, and cares little about what should be; the Russian writer cares immensely about what should be, and rather forgets that it can only be approached by slow and difficult steps to take which surefootedly needs an appreciation of things as they are.

Neither of them manages to say the word which would synthesize their divergent views: namely, that no self-respecting people should support or tolerate as rulers men who seek to gain national advantages by means not strictly fair, honest, and even generous. That is the key to the world's peace. Kinglake's appeal to us not to hamper the government that represents us, and Tolstóy's appeal to us not to spend our energies in preparing to slay our fellow men, can both be met in that way, and perhaps only in that way.

For an ambitious young officer actually engaged in a war even partially to express disapproval of war was difficult; and forty-seven years later when speaking of it to me Tolstóy said that, contending with his desire to tell the truth about things as he saw it, he was at the same time aware of another feeling prompting him to say what was expected of him.

He, however, like the child in Andersen's story who sees that the king has nothing on when every one else is in ecstasies over the magnificence of the monarch's robes, had the gift of seeing things with his own eyes, as well as a great gift of truthfulness. These were the qualities which ultimately made him the greatest literary power of his century; and in spite of his own hesitation and the Censor's mutilations, we may still read the description he then wrote of the way in which the French and Russian soldiers hobnobbed together

in friendship during a truce to allow the dead to be buried, a description closing with these words:

White flags are on the bastions and parallels; the flowery valley is covered with corpses; the beautiful sun is sinking towards the blue sea; and the undulating blue sea glitters in the golden rays of the sun. Thousands of people crowd together, look at, speak to, and smile at one another. And these people—Christians confessing the one great law of love and self-sacrifice—seeing what they have done—do not at once fall repentant on their knees before Him who has given them life and laid in the soul of each a fear of death and a love of goodness and of beauty, and do not embrace like brothers with tears of joy and happiness.

The white flags are lowered, again the engines of death and suffering are sounding, again innocent blood flows, and the air is filled with moans and curses.

The concluding paragraphs of the sketch are:

There, I have said what I wished to say this time. But a painful hesitation seizes me. Perhaps I ought to have left it unsaid. Perhaps what I have said belongs to that class of evil truths which, unconsciously hidden within the soul of each one, should not be uttered for fear of becoming injurious, as the dregs in a bottle must not be shaken for fear of spoiling the wine.

Where in this tale is the evil shown that should be avoided? Where is the good that should be imitated? Who is the villain, who the hero of the story? All are good, and all are bad. . . .

The hero of my tale, whom I love with all the power of my soul, whom I have tried to portray in all his beauty, who has been, is, and will be, beautiful—is Truth.

In *Sevastopol*, and in Tennyson's *Charge of the Light Brigade* (with its rhymes about 'hundred' and 'thundered', and its panegyric of those who knew it was not their business to think, and at whom 'all the world wondered'), we have two typical expressions of conflicting views on war: the view of a man who knew it from the classics and was Poet Laureate, and the view of a man who was in the thick of it and whose eyes were connected with his brain.

Thirty-four years later Tolstóy wrote a Preface to a fellow-officer's *Recollections of Sevastopol*, and I cannot conclude this chapter better than by quoting a few sentences from it.

Speaking of the position of a young officer engaged in the Crimean war, he says:

To the first question that suggests itself to every one, Why did he do it? Why did he not cease, and go away?—the author does not reply. He does not say, as men said in olden times when they hated their enemies as the Jews hated the Philistines, that he hated the Allies; on the contrary he here and there shows his sympathy for them as for brother men.

Nor does he speak of any passionate desire that the keys of the Church at Jerusalem should be in our hands, or even that our fleet should, or should not, exist. You feel as you read, that for him the life and death of men are not commensurable with questions of politics. And the reader feels that to the question: Why did the author act as he did?—there is only one answer. It was because I enlisted while still young, or before the war began, or because owing to inexperience I chanced to slip into a position from which I could not extricate myself without great effort. I was entrapped into that position, and when they obliged me to do the most unnatural actions in the world, to kill my brother men who had done me no harm, I preferred to do this rather than suffer punishment and disgrace. . . . One feels that the author knows there is a law of God: love thy neighbour and therefore do not kill him—a law which cannot be repealed by any human artifice.

The merit of the book consists in that. It is a pity it is only felt and not plainly and clearly expressed. Sufferings and deaths are described; but we are not told what caused them. Thirty-five years ago even that was well, but now something more is needed. We should be told what it is that causes soldiers to suffer and to die—that we may know, and understand, and destroy these causes.

'War! How terrible,' people say, 'is war, with its wounds, bloodshed, and deaths! We must organize a Red Cross Society to alleviate the wounds, sufferings, and pains of death.' But, truly, what is dreadful in war is not the wounds, sufferings, and deaths. The human race that has always suffered and died, should by this time be accustomed to suffering and death and should not be aghast at them. Without war people die by famine, by inundations, and by epidemics. It

is not suffering and death that are terrible, but that which allows people to inflict suffering and death. . . .

It is not the suffering and mutilation and death of man's body that most needs to be diminished—but the mutilation and death of his soul. Not the *Red Cross* is needed, but the simple cross of Christ to destroy falsehood and deception. . . .

I was finishing this Preface when a cadet from the Military College came to see me. He told me that he was troubled by religious doubts. . . . He had read nothing of mine. I spoke cautiously to him of how to read the Gospels so as to find in them the answers to life's problems. He listened and agreed. Towards the end of our conversation I mentioned wine, and advised him not to drink. He replied: 'but in military service it is sometimes necessary.' I thought he meant necessary for health and strength and I intended triumphantly to overthrow him by proofs from experience and science, but he continued: 'Why, at Geok-Tepe, for instance, when Skóbelev had to massacre the inhabitants, the soldiers did not wish to do it, but he had drink served out and then . . .!' Here are all the horrors of war—they are in this lad with his fresh young face, his little shoulder-straps (under which the ends of his hood are so neatly tucked), his well-cleaned boots, his naïve eyes, and with so perverted a conception of life.

This is the real horror of war!

What millions of Red Cross workers could heal the wounds that swarm in that remark—the result of a whole system of education!

CHAPTER V

PETERSBURG. THE COUNTRY. A LOVE AFFAIR

A NUMBER of distinguished writers have recorded their opinions of the talented young officer who appeared in Petersburg before the war was quite over and immediately entered the circle then supporting the *Contemporary*. From their memoirs one sees what Tolstóy was like at this, the stormiest and least satisfactory period of his life.

The *Contemporary* was a monthly review founded by Púshkin and Pletnév in 1836. It passed in 1847 to Panáev and the poet Nekrásov, and when Tolstóy began to write was recognized as the leading and most progressive Russian literary periodical. Its chief contributors formed a group united by close personal acquaintance, by sympathy with the Emancipation movement then making itself felt, and by a common agreement (not very strictly or permanently observed) to write exclusively for the *Contemporary*. The point to be noticed is that the circle Tolstóy entered consisted of a friendly, sociable group of people who considered themselves ardent reformers; and that though his talent and his wish to have his works published threw him and them together, he never appears to have had the least inclination to co-operate on the footing of mutual toleration which is so essential in public life. Certainly he never became friendly with the more advanced men, such as Chernyshévski, and the ultra-democratic Dobrolyúbov, who were intent on spreading democratic and socialistic ideas.

It has been suggested that this was due to the fact that Tolstóy was an aristocrat and they were democrats, but one has to go deeper than that for the explanation, which lies to a considerable extent in the fact that the advanced

Russian Radicals desired the carrying out of reforms by the exercise of Governmental authority, whereas Tolstóy from the very start tended to be a No-Government man, an anarchist, and objected to linking himself up with any group, since any such alliance implies some amount of compromise and some subordination of one's own opinion.

With the first aim of the progressive movement, the emancipation of the serfs, he sympathized warmly, but with the prevailing trend of the denunciatory literature of that day he was not in sympathy. In a letter of 2nd July 1856 to Nekrásov, he says:

Among us, not in criticism only but in literature generally and even in society, the opinion is accepted that to feel indignant, splenetic, and angry, is very good. . . . But I hold that it is nasty; for a splenetic, angry man is not in a normal condition. A loving man on the contrary is so, and only in a normal condition can one do good and see things clearly.

Entries in his Diary indicate his discord with his surroundings, and also his consciousness of faults on his own side. For instance:

5th May 1856: Dinner to Turgénev at which (foolishly offended by a verse of Nekrásov's) I said unpleasant things to everybody. Turgénev left. I am sad, especially as I am writing nothing.

On 13 November:

To Druzhínin's after three. Goncharóv, Ánnenkov—all disgust me, especially Druzhínin, and they disgust me because I want affection and friendship—of which they are incapable.

The poet Fet, who was himself a young officer, made Tolstóy's acquaintance at this time. A couple of years later he purchased an estate at no great distance from Yásnaya Polyána and became a friend of Tolstóy—one in fact of the few people not of his own family with whom, after reaching maturity, Tolstóy formed a close personal friendship.

Fet's first acquaintance with him was however hardly

auspicious. Calling on Turgénev in Petersburg at ten
 1855 o'clock one morning, he saw an officer's sword hang-
 ing in the hall and asked the man-servant whose it
 was. 'It's Count Tolstóy's sword,' replied the man. 'He
 is sleeping in the drawing-room. Iván Sergéevich
 [Turgénev] is having breakfast in the study.' During
 Fet's visit of an hour's duration he and his host had to
 converse in low tones for fear of waking Tolstóy. 'He
 is like this all the time,' said Turgénev. 'He came back
 from his Sevastopol battery, put up here, and is going
 the pace. Sprees, gipsy-girls, and cards all night long
 —and then he sleeps like a corpse till two in the afternoon.
 At first I tried to put the brake on, but now I've given
 it up and let him do as he likes.'

Fet tells us that as soon as he met Tolstóy he noticed
 his instinctive defiance of all accepted opinions, and at
 Nekrásov's the first time he saw Tolstóy and Turgénev
 together he witnessed the exasperation to which Tolstóy
 reduced Turgénev by his biting retorts.

'I can't admit,' said Tolstóy, 'that what you say expresses
 your conviction. If I stand at the door with a dagger or a
 sword and say, "While I am alive no one shall enter here,"
 that shows conviction. But here you all try to conceal the
 true inwardness of your thoughts from one another, and call
that conviction!'

'Why do you come here?' squeaked Turgénev panting, his
 voice rising to a falsetto (as always happened when he was
 disputing). 'Your banner is not here! Go! Go to the salon of
 Princess Belévski-Belózereva!'

'Why should I ask you where I am to go? Besides, empty
 talk won't become conviction merely because I am, or am
 not, here,' replied Tolstóy.

Fet's stay in Petersburg at this time was a short one
 and he therefore saw little of Tolstóy. D. V. Grigoróvich,
 the novelist, however, reported to him another scene,
 which also occurred at Nekrásov's lodging.

You can't imagine what it was like! Great Heavens! [said
 Grigoróvich.] Turgénev squeaked and squeaked, holding his
 hand to his throat, and with the eyes of a dying gazelle

whispered: 'I can stand no more! I have bronchitis!' and began walking to and fro through the three rooms. 'Bronchitis is an imaginary illness,' growls Tolstóy after him: 'Bronchitis is a metal!'

Of course Nekrásov's heart sank: he feared to lose either of these valuable contributors to the *Contemporary*. We were all agitated, and at our wits' end to know what to say. Tolstóy, in the middle room, lay sulking on the morocco sofa; while Turgénev, spreading the tails of his short coat and with his hands in his pockets, strode to and fro through the three rooms. To avert a catastrophe I went to the sofa and said, 'Tolstóy, old chap, don't get excited! You don't know how he esteems and loves you!'

'I won't allow him to do anything to spite me!' exclaimed Tolstóy with dilated nostrils. 'There! Now he keeps marching past me on purpose, wagging his democratic haunches!'

The rest of the evidence is of much the same nature. Of desire to agree there was hardly a trace in Tolstóy, who never doubted sincerity in himself but seldom credited others with it.

Grigoróvich, in his *Literary Memoirs*, tells us that knowing how out of sympathy Tolstóy was with Petersburg and how evident it was that everything there irritated him, he was surprised to find that he took permanent lodgings. Grigoróvich, himself a Contemporary, had met Tolstóy in Moscow and coming across him again in Petersburg and hearing that he was invited to dine with the staff of the *Contemporary* but did not yet know any of them intimately, agreed to accompany him.

On the way I warned him to be on his guard about certain matters, and especially to avoid attacking George Sand, whom he much disliked but who was devoutly worshipped by many of the group. The dinner passed off all right, Tolstóy being rather quiet at first, but at last he broke out. Some one praised George Sand's new novel and he abruptly declared his hatred of her, adding that the heroines of the novels she was then writing, if they really existed, ought to be tied to the hangman's cart and driven through the streets of Petersburg.

In spite of the curious convolutions of Tolstóy's char-

acter there was a remarkable tenacity of conviction running through his whole life, and a remark in *Resurrection*, written nearly half a century later, throws a flood of light on his detestation of George Sand's emancipated heroines while himself living a loose life. In that book the hero has been attracted as well as repelled, first by Mariette, the General's wife, and then by a handsome demi-mondaine he passes in the street, and this is his reflection:

The animalism of man's brute nature is disgusting, thought he; but so long as it remains in its naked form we observe it from the height of our spiritual life and despise it; and, whether one has fallen or resisted, one remains what one was before. But when that same animalism hides under a cloak of poetry and aesthetic feeling and demands our worship—then we are swallowed up by it completely and worship animalism, no longer distinguishing good from evil. Then it is awful!

Grigoróvich in another place speaks of Tolstóy's 'readiness to contradict'. It did not matter what opinion was being expressed, and the more authoritative the speaker appeared to be the more eager was Tolstóy to oppose him and begin a verbal duel. 'Watching how he listened to the speaker and pierced him with his eyes, and noticing how ironically he pressed his lips together, one conjectured that he was preparing not a direct reply but such an expression of opinion as would perplex his opponent by its unexpectedness.'

Danílevski, the novelist, confirms this impression of Tolstóy's eagerness to oppose. They met at the house of a well-known sculptor. Tolstóy entered the drawing-room while a new work of Herzen's was being read aloud and quietly took up a position behind the reader's chair. When the reading was over he began, at first gently and with restraint, then hotly and boldly, to attack Herzen and the enthusiasm then current for his revolutionary and emancipatory works; and he spoke so convincingly and with such sincerity that Danílevski says he never afterwards saw one of Herzen's publications in that house.

Turgénev once said: 'In Tolstóy the character which afterwards lay at the base of his whole outlook on life early made itself manifest. He never believed in people's sincerity. Every spiritual movement seemed to him false, and with his extraordinarily penetrating eyes he used to pierce those on whom his suspicion fell'; and Turgénev went on to say that personally he had never encountered anything more disconcerting than that inquisitorial look which accompanied by two or three biting words was enough to goad to fury any man who lacked strong self-control.

The different sides of people's characters do not always expand simultaneously or harmoniously, and it frequently happens that men awakening to a sense of public duty remain self-indulgent in regard to wine or women, and that others become abstainers or respectable husbands while still oblivious of the political duties they owe to the community. Among the reform group there was a good deal of gluttony, drinking, gambling, and loose living, and Tolstóy—though he was often remorseful and repentant about his own excesses with wine, women, and cards—having an innate propensity to demand *all or nothing*, bitterly resented this inconsistency in others. He would no doubt have considered it hypocritical had he himself come forward as a reformer before obtaining mastery over his own appetites, and he judged others by the same strict standard.

The ill-success of the Crimean war had dealt a blow to the prestige of the autocracy and a series of wide-reaching reforms was at this time being prepared—including the reform of civil and criminal law, the introduction of trial by jury and oral proceedings in the law courts, the establishment of the *Zémstvos* (a system of Local Government somewhat resembling our County Councils) and some relaxation of the insensate severity of the press censorship. But though Tolstóy reached Petersburg at a moment when Russia was entering on this hopeful and fruitful period of internal reform, his published writings, apart from the implicit condemna-

tion of serfdom in *A Landlord's Morning* and in *Poliksúhka*, do not express much sympathy with the progressive movement, or show much perception of the advantage that accrues to nations whose inhabitants interest themselves in public affairs. He never realized that even if people make bad laws for themselves, the very fact of being invited to think on large practical matters and being allowed to test their conclusions in practice, fosters freedom of the intelligence and encourages action in accord with thought; and that this habit of applying the mind to the guidance of practical affairs, overflows into a nation's commerce, industry, and agriculture, ultimately causing the difference that exists between the comparative material security of our Western world and the chronic fear of famine that oppresses many Eastern lands.

But complex problems of public policy—which are always difficult and call for patience, tolerant co-operation, and a willingness to accept half-loaves when whole ones are unobtainable—never were to Tolstóy's taste. He hankered after simple, clear-cut solutions, such as are attainable only subjectively, in the mind.

A few years later he commenced a novel, *The Decembrists*, which begins with a description of these reform years. It shows how scornfully he regarded the movement for the liberation of the people and the democratization of their institutions. These are his words:

This happened not long ago, in the reign of Alexander II, in our times of civilization, progress, *problems*, re-birth of Russia, &c., &c.; the time when the victorious Russian army returned from Sevastopol which it had surrendered to the enemy; when all Russia was celebrating the destruction of the Black Sea fleet, and white-walled Moscow greeted, and congratulated on that auspicious event, the remainder of the crews of that fleet, offering them a good old Russian goblet of vódka and in the good old Russian way bringing them bread and salt¹ and bowing at their feet. This was the time

¹ Offering 'bread and salt' is a traditional Russian sign of welcome and hospitality.

when Russia, in the person of her far-sighted virginal politicians, wept over the destruction of her dream of a Te Deum in the Cathedral of St. Sophia and the deep-felt loss to the fatherland of two great men who had perished during the war (one who, carried away by impatience to hear the Te Deum referred to above, had fallen on the fields of Wallachia—not without leaving there two squadrons of Hussars; and the other an invaluable man who distributed tea, other people's money, and sheets, to the wounded without stealing anything); at that time when from all sides, in all departments of human activity in Russia, great men sprang up like mushrooms: commanders, administrators, economists, writers, orators, and simply great men without any special calling or aim; at that time when at the jubilee of a Moscow actor public opinion, fortified by a toast, appeared and began to punish all wrong-doers; when stern commissioners galloped from Petersburg to the South and captured, exposed, and punished commissariat rascals; when in all the towns dinners with toasts were given to the heroes of Sevastopol, and to those of them whose arms and legs had been torn off, coppers were given by those who met them on the bridges or highways; at that time when oratorical talents were so rapidly developed among the people that one purveyor of liquor everywhere and on all occasions wrote, printed, and repeated by heart at dinners, such powerful speeches that the guardians of order were obliged to undertake repressive measures to subdue his eloquence; when even in the English Club in Moscow a special room was set apart for the consideration of public affairs; when periodicals appeared under the most varied banners: journals developing European principles on a European basis but with a Russian world-conception, and journals on an exclusively Russian basis developing Russian principles but with a European world-conception; when suddenly so many journals appeared that it seemed as if all possible titles had been used up: *The Messenger*, *The World*, *The Discourse*, *The Eagle*, and many others; when nevertheless fresh titles presented themselves continually; at that time when pleiades of new author-philosophers appeared proving that Science is national, and is not national, and is international, and so on: and pleiades of writer-artists who described woods, and sunrises, and thunders, and the love of a Russian maiden, and the idleness of one official, and the misconduct of many officials; at that time when from all sides appeared 'problems' (as in the year '56 every concourse of

circumstances was called of which nobody could make head or tail): the problem of the Cadet Schools, the Universities, the Censor, oral tribunals, finance, the banks, the police, the Emancipation, and many others; everybody still tried to discover new questions and everybody tried to solve them; they wrote, and read, and talked, and drew up projects, and all wished to amend, destroy, and alter, and all Russians as one man were in an indescribable state of enthusiasm. That was a condition which has occurred twice in Russia in the nineteenth century: the first time was in the year '12 when we thrashed Napoleon I, and the second time was in '56 when Napoleon III thrashed us. Great, unforgettable epoch of the re-birth of the Russian people! Like the Frenchman who said that he had not lived at all who had not lived during the Great French Revolution, so I make bold to say that he who did not live in Russia in '56, does not know what life is. The writer of these lines not merely lived at that time but was one of the workers of that period. Not merely did he personally sit for some weeks in one of the casemates of Sevastopol, but he wrote a work about the Crimean War which brought him great fame and in which he clearly and minutely described how the soldiers in the bastion fired off their muskets, how in the hospitals people were bound up with bandages, and how in the cemetery they were buried in the earth.

Having performed these exploits the writer of these lines arrived at the heart of the Empire at a rocket establishment, where he reaped his laurels. He witnessed the enthusiasm of both capitals and of the whole people, and experienced in his own person how Russia can reward real service. The great ones of the earth sought his acquaintance, pressed his hands, offered him dinners, persistently invited him to come and see them, and in order to hear from him particulars about the war narrated to him their own sensations. Therefore the writer of these lines knows how to appreciate that great and memorable time. But that is not what I want to tell about.

The very day he reached Petersburg from Sevastopol, in November 1855, Tolstóy had called on Turgénev, who begged him to stay with him and introduced him to all that was most interesting in Petersburg literary and artistic circles, watching over his interests 'like an old nurse', as Turgénev himself once expressed it. He

greatly appreciated Tolstóy's artistic genius, but was strangely blind to the specially Tolstóyan side of his guest's complex nature. As we have already seen, friction soon arose between the two, and though they again and again made friends, their friendship was always unstable.

Early in 1856 Tolstóy's third brother, Dmítri, died at 1856 Orël. His story has been told in Chapter II. Tolstóy says: 'I was particularly horrid at that time. I went to Orël from Petersburg, where I frequented society and was filled with conceit. I felt sorry for Mítenka but not very sorry. I paid him a hurried visit, but did not stay at Orël, and my brother died a few days after I left. I really believe that what hurt me most was that it prevented my taking part in some private theatricals then being got up at Court, to which I had been invited.'

An entry in his Diary on 10 January runs:

I am in Orël. My brother Dmítri is dying. How the bad thoughts I used to have about him crumble to dust. Másha [the woman Dmítri had taken from a brothel] and Tatiána Alexándrovna [Tolstóy's Auntie] are nursing him.

2nd February: Am in Petersburg. Brother Dmítri is dead. I heard of it to-day. From to-morrow I want to spend my days so that it should be pleasant to remember them. . . . My chief shortcomings are idle habits, lack of order, sensuality, and a passion for gambling. Will struggle against them.

A fortnight later comes an entry:

Dined with Turgénev. We have made it up. In the evening a demi-monde gathering at Gordéev's. My girl, Peiker, is extremely talented, but though she laughs well it seems insincere. . . . To-morrow I will work six hours and promise myself not to go to bed till I have done it.

A month later Tolstóy, for the first time, challenged a man to a duel. The entry in his Diary, on 21st March, runs:

The day before yesterday I accidentally read a letter of Longínov's and have sent him a challenge. God knows what will come of it but I shall be firm and resolute. I am making

up my mind to go into the country, marry as soon as possible, and not write any more under my own name. Above all always and with everybody be reticent and careful in what I say!

This is what had happened: at a card party one evening at Nekrásov's a letter arrived from M. N. Longínov, who was a contributor to the *Contemporary*. Nekrásov, engaged at cards, handed the letter to Tolstóy and asked him to read it out. As ill luck would have it the letter contained an indictment of Tolstóy for lack of free-thought. Tolstóy read the letter and said nothing, but leaving the house at once sent Longínov an abrupt challenge.

Next day, instead of Longínov's seconds, Nekrásov arrived much distressed, and said: 'If you do not withdraw your challenge to Longínov you will have to exchange shots with me. I am at fault for this whole muddle and must bear the responsibility for it.' Tolstóy did not withdraw his challenge, but Longínov did not reply to it, and the affair came to nothing.

Three months later Tolstóy wrote to Nekrásov from Yásnaya Polyána: 'Can you imagine that only now, in the country, remembering the affair with Longínov, I have realized how stupidly I behaved in the whole matter. I now heartily ask your pardon and will do the same to Longínov as soon as I see him.'

On 24th May he notes in his Diary:

Some one wished to go to the Hermitage [a famous Moscow restaurant]. I was weak enough to agree. Met Longínov there and was foolish enough to go past him purposely looking at him. Altogether, after half an hour, I carried away from there a feeling of intolerable depression.

Till 18th May—that is for half a year—Tolstoy had lived in Petersburg amid such surroundings. His best acquaintance there was with his 'Aunt', Countess Alexándra Tolstóy, with whom he maintained very cordial relations for many years.

While still in Petersburg he was concerned with plans

for the liberation of his serfs; of whom he then had 309 males besides women-folk.

In March 1856 Alexander II, in a speech to an assembly of the Moscow nobility, had remarked that the emancipation of the serfs must come about some day, and that it would 'therefore be much better for it to come from above than from below'. In the Ministry of the Interior plans for the gradual liberation of the serfs of individual proprietors were being prepared and sanctioned. Tolstóy was one of the first to set himself to find a way to accomplish this, but the case was complicated by the fact that his estate was mortgaged to a State banking institution for 20,000 rubles.

The ruble, be it noted in passing, before the Crimean war was worth about 38*d.* redeemable in silver. When that war broke out it fell, was no longer exchangeable for silver, and never afterwards recovered its former value, but fluctuated (usually between 24 and 32 pence) during the rest of Tolstoy's life, falling as low as 18 pence as a result of the Turkish war of 1878 and being fixed at about 25 pence in gold towards the end of the nineteenth century.

On 22nd April 1856 Tolstóy notes in his Diary: 'My relation to my serfs is beginning to trouble me much. I feel the need of learning, learning, and learning.'

Next evening he went to see K. D. Kavélin, who wrote for the *Contemporary* and was an advocate of emancipation. Of him Tolstóy notes:

A delightful mind and nature. The serf-question is becoming clearer. I returned from him bright, hopeful, and happy. Shall go back to the country with a ready-written project.

Next day he drafts a project for the emancipation of his serfs and listens to 'Kavélin's charming proposals'. On the 25th he visits N. A. Milútin, a prominent advocate of emancipation who, he says, 'explained much to me and showed me a project which I read while having dinner'. And on returning home Tolstóy wrote out, for submission to the Minister of the Interior, a plan for the liberation of his own serfs at Yásnaya.

Milútin took him to see Lévshin, Assistant Minister of the Interior, who received him 'drily' and evidently did not give him much encouragement, for Tolstóy notes: 'Whatever one undertakes to do in Russia to-day, everything is rearranged and the rearranging is done by men who are old and therefore unsuitable.'

Next day he visits his 'Aunts' Alexandra and her sister, who were Maids of Honour at the Palace, and reads to them and their visitors his new story *Two Hussars*. He notes in his Diary that day:

Yes, the means to gain true happiness in life is, without any laws, to throw out from oneself in all directions like a spider an adhesive web of love, and catch in it all that comes: an old woman, a child, a girl, or a policeman.

The word here translated 'laws' might be rendered as 'rules', but following so closely on his rebuff at the Ministry of the Interior, it probably means that happiness is to be found in personal affection and not by legal enactments.

Next day he notes: 'Lévshin said he had reported to the Minister, but all the same his reply was evasive. I shall write my project nevertheless.'

On 16th May he received furlough and next day went to Moscow. On the 27th he started to drive from there to Yásnaya Polyána, which he reached next day.

28th May: . . . At Yásnaya it is sad, pleasant, but somehow not in harmony with my feelings. However, comparing myself with old Yásnaya memories, I felt how much I had changed in a liberal direction. . . . To-day I am calling a meeting, and will say what God grants. . . . Have been to the meeting. Things are going well. The peasants understand gladly, consider me a speculator, and therefore believe in me.

In that meeting he read to the peasants the proposal he had written in Petersburg, and offered them their freedom.

The plan was that the land they were cultivating should be transferred from Tolstóy to the village Commune. Each household would receive 12 acres

(4½ desyatíns), of which half a desyatín would be given free, and for the rest they were to pay 5 rubles a year per desyatín for about thirty years. Of this amount one ruble would go to pay off the mortgage on the land, and the other four would complete the purchase. On signing the agreement the serfs would be free from all other obligations to the proprietor. The village Commune would collect the amounts, and if there were arrears the proprietor might resume occupation of sufficient land to cover the deficit or might exact from the peasants an equivalent in work.

The serfs hesitated and took time to consider. Rumours were rife among them that at the approaching coronation the Tsar would grant them freedom and transfer the land to them without cost. To Tolstóy's surprise they therefore declined his proposals. Both in *A Landlord's Morning* and in *Resurrection* he has described just such scenes.

On 3rd June he notes:

. . . There was no meeting in the evening, but I hear from Vasíli that the peasants suspect a fraud, and think that freedom will be given to everybody at the coronation and that I want to bind them by contract. That it is a 'sell' as he expressed it.

4th June: . . . Went to the peasants. They don't want their freedom.

7th June: In the evening talked with some of the peasants and their obstinacy drove me to anger, which I repressed with difficulty.

In a letter he drafted (but did not send) to Count Blúdov, President of the Department of Laws, Tolstóy urged the need of a prompt decree of emancipation for the serfs, even in the first instance without land, as to arrange for its transfer would take too long. He added:

A way out must be found. If within six months the serfs are not freed there will be a conflagration. Everything is ready for it; treasonable hands are not lacking to light the fire of tumult and then the fire will spread everywhere. . . .

This prediction was not verified for another sixty

years. What happened at the time was that the serfs were emancipated in 1861 and the succeeding years with a modest allotment of land for the loss of which the proprietors received compensation in Government bonds—the value of which the State was to recover from the taxation of the peasants over a long period of years. This was accomplished at the time without any such serious disturbances as Tolstóy anticipated.

He goes on to note the absurdity of the relations that then existed between the serfs and their proprietors and says:

It's as if two strong men were bound together by a sharp chain, it is painful to them both and when one of them moves he involuntarily cuts the other, and neither is free to work.

10th June: . . . There was a meeting in the evening. They definitely refused to sign. The quit-tax will be discussed in autumn, and I shall be in the country.

Lest a mistake made by me in the first short biography of Tolstóy I wrote, which has been cited by other writers, should continue to cause misapprehension, let me here quote from a letter Tolstóy wrote me at that time, in which he said:

I have received your book and read it with pleasure. The short biography is excellent, except the place where you, quoting the words of Sophia Andréevna [his wife] say that 'he liberated his peasants before the Emancipation'. That is wrong: I placed them on *obrók* [subject to fixed yearly payment] instead of keeping them on *bárchina* [subject to labour dues]. It was not possible to emancipate them . . .

Reverting from these matters we must now go back three months, and note that in March the war had ended. On 25th March Tolstóy wrote to his brother Sergéy:

I want to go abroad for eight months, and if they give me leave I shall do so. I wrote to Nikólenka about it and asked him to come too. If we could all three arrange to go together it would be first-rate. If each of us took 1,000 rubles we could do the trip capitally.

Please write and tell me how you like *The Snow Storm*. I am dissatisfied with it—seriously. But I now want to write many

things, only I positively have no time in this damned Petersburg. Anyway whether they let me go abroad or not I intend to take furlough in April and come to the country.

On 14th May, he notes:

Found X and Y at Donan's half-way through their dinner. We went to Pavlóvsk. Disgusting! Girls, silly music, girls, an artificial nightingale, girls, heat, cigarette-smoke, girls, vódka, cheese, wild shrieks, girls, girls, girls!

Everybody trying to pretend they were jolly and that the girls pleased them, but unsuccessfully.

And the next day:

Never miss opportunities of enjoying yourself, and never seek them. I promise myself for ever—never to enter a cabaret or a b. . . . Spent a pleasant evening at my Aunts' and then called in at Dusseau's and found myself at supper with S. and others and a girl. My foot shall never, never, step inside a public place except a concert or a theatre.

Among his literary acquaintances at this time one for whom (despite a remark previously quoted) Tolstóy seems generally to have felt much respect, was Druzhínin, a critic, writer of stories, and translator of Shakespeare. Druzhínin led a revolt against the *Contemporary* and attracted some of the contributors to the *Reading Library*, a rival magazine, to which in December 1856 Tolstóy contributed his story, *Meeting a Moscow Acquaintance in the Detachment, from Prince Nekhlúdob's Caucasian Memoirs*.¹ This long title resulted from the intervention of the Censor, who would not allow it to be called *Razhálovanny* [*The Man Reduced to the Ranks*] as Tolstóy intended.

It was not till the middle of May that he left Petersburg, and on his road home he stopped in Moscow and visited the family of Dr. Behrs, a Russian of German origin who had married Miss Islávin, a friend of Tolstóy's childhood. The first mention one gets of his future wife is a note in the Diary relating to this visit to Dr.

¹ Included with *The Cossacks* in a volume of the 'World's Classics' Series.

Behrs's country house near Moscow. 'The children waited on us. What dear, merry, little girls!' Little more than six years later the second of these 'merry little girls' became Countess Tolstóy!

Three days later he writes to his brother Sergéy:

I spent ten days in Moscow . . . very pleasantly, without champagne or gipsies, but a little in love—I will tell you later on with whom.

The object of his affection at that time was not Dr. Behrs's twelve-year-old daughter, but the Princess A. Obolénski, the sister of his old college friend Dyákov. An entry in the Diary on 22nd May says:

Dined at Dyákov's. Did not recognize A. Obolénski she has so changed. I did not expect to meet her and so the feeling she aroused in me was terribly acute. From there went to Aksákov's and heard the Fourth Part read. It is good, but the old man got overpraised. Returned to Dyákov's, danced a little, and left there with Alexander Sukhotín, passionately in love. Yes, it hurts me even now to think of the happiness that might have been mine and which has fallen to the share of that excellent fellow A. Obolénski.

24th May: Heard that the Obolénskis would be at the Sukhotíns'. Went there. S. was strumming Chopin and A. [Mme. Obolénski] as usual came and went, and we did not talk much. Once or twice while I spoke she was all attention. No, I am not being carried away when I say that she is the sweetest woman I know. The most refined, artistic, and at the same time moral, nature.

And on 25th May:

I was late for dinner at the Dyákovs'. A.'s daughter is ill. She told Sergéy Sukotín in my presence that when she was betrothed there were no lovers. Her husband was not present. Can she have meant to tell me that she was not in love with him? Afterwards when saying goodbye she *suddenly* gave me her hand and there were tears in her eyes because she had been crying about her daughter's illness, but I felt awfully happy. After that she unexpectedly saw me to the door. Certainly since Sónetchka's days [Sónya Kalóshina, a friend of his early years, described in *Youth* as Sónichka Valákhina] I have not experienced such a pure, strong, and good, feeling.

I say 'good' because though it is hopeless it gives me joy to arouse it. I want terribly to work at *Youth*; I think because in it that feeling is re-lived.

26th May: I went and talked with A. for three hours, sometimes tête-à-tête and sometimes with her husband. I am convinced that she knows my feelings and that she is pleased. I was awfully happy. . . .

And when leaving, next day, for Yásnaya Polyána, he notes:

Obolénski came, and I might have spent another evening with A. Who knows whether it would not have been for the worse?

From Yásnaya he made a round of visits to see his married sister and other neighbours, among them Turgénev at whose house a gathering of the Tolstóys took place. Special honour was paid to Leo, who comically posed as the hero of a Triumph. He was being crowned and almost covered with flowers, leaves, grass, and anything that came handy, when the approach of an unwelcome guest—a lady neighbour of Turgénev's—was announced. Thereupon the host seized his head in despair; the triumpher, with a howl, began to turn rapid catherine-wheel somersaults through the rooms; and his brother-in-law was quickly bandaged up as an invalid, to serve as an excuse and protection from the unwelcome intruder.

The letter to Sergéy, already referred to, contains an allusion to Tolstóy's first serious matrimonial project, which has now to be recounted.

At one time—probably after his return from the Crimea and certainly before his marriage—Tolstóy had an affair with a peasant-woman which resulted in the birth of an illegitimate son. In later years this son, Timothy, served as coachman to one of Tolstóy's younger sons. The mother, Aksénia, figures in Tolstóy's posthumous novel *The Devil*¹ as Stepanída. V. G. Alexéev (who lived in Tolstóy's family as a tutor and

¹ Allen & Unwin, London, and Harper Bros., New York.

became his friend) in his reminiscences, which may be published some day, mentions that *The Devil* was suggested by an incident in 1880 with a cook named Dómna. That, no doubt, is correct, but Dómna was only a passing incident; Tolstóy never yielded to her and it is plain that his recollection of Aksénia counted for most in the story.

This affair probably immediately preceded his nearly becoming engaged to a young lady whose guardian he was and who lived on an estate not very far from Yásnaya. It was at one time even reported among friends and relations that Tolstóy was engaged to her.

Side lights are shed on the affair by his stories *Family Happiness*¹ and *The Devil*.

Tolstóy, as we have seen, had long looked forward to getting married, and found bachelorhood hard to endure, being much dissatisfied with his own conduct in sex matters. In Chapter V of *The Devil* he says of his hero:

It is impossible to explain why Eugene chose Líza Ánnenskaya, as it is never possible to explain why a man chooses this, and not that, woman. There were many reasons—positive and negative. One was that she was not a very rich heiress, . . . another that she was naïve and to be pitied in her relations with her mother; then there was the fact that she was not a beauty who attracted general attention to herself, but yet was not bad looking. The chief reason was that his acquaintance with her began at a time when Eugene was ripe for marriage. He fell in love because he knew that he would marry.

An English edition of Tolstóy's letters to Valéria was published a few years ago under the title of *Tolstoi's Love Letters*. Fate seems to decree that books relating to Tolstóy which mis-spell his name always contain other more serious blunders, and in this case we were given 'Tolstoi's Letters to his Fiancée', though the letters themselves and the Diary both clearly show that there was, in fact, no engagement.

¹ *Family Happiness* is in the volume entitled *The Kreutzer Sonata and Other Stories* in the 'World's Classics' series.

On 15th June 1856 he notes in his Diary:

Gadded about with Dyákov. He gave me much practical advice . . . and above all advised me to marry Valérya. After listening to him it seems to me, too, the best thing I can do. Can it be that money restrains me? No, it's chance. Then he gave me a lift to the turning towards Sudakóvo [Valérya's home]. Valérya put on a stern appearance probably because of my letter. I was in a good mood and calmed them. Poor thing! Her aunt seems horrid. Of course the best person she knows is Vergani [a French lady-companion], but how bad that is! It is a pity she has no backbone or fire—like vermicelli.

18th June: Dyákov came and I persuaded him to go to the Arsénevs' with me. Valérya chattered about clothes and the coronation. She is rather frivolous. It seems to be not a passing but an enduring passion. My arrival with Dyákov was awkward, seeming to promise something.

26th June: . . . Drove to the Arsénevs'. . . Valérya was in a white dress. Very charming. Spent one of the pleasantest days of my life. Do I love her seriously? And can she love for long? These are two questions I should like to solve, but cannot.

28th June: Toothache worse. After dinner went to the Arsenevs'. Valérya is extremely badly educated, and ignorant if not stupid. The word *prostituér* which she uttered, Heaven knows why, grieved me greatly and, added to my toothache, disillusioned me.

30th June: . . . The Arsénevs arrived. Valérya is a splendid girl but she certainly does not please me. However if we meet so often I may suddenly marry her. That would not be a misfortune, but it is unnecessary and I do not desire it.

1st July: . . . Spent the whole day with Valérya. She had a white dress on and bare arms, and hers are not shapely. This upset me.

5th July: Woke early, bathed. A girl came there, but I was in a good frame of mind and sent her away. Played with the children, dined, had music. Turgénev arrived. He is decidedly an inconsistent, cold, and difficult person, and I pity him. I shall never get on with him. Walked about in a vague state of sensual desire till two o'clock.

12th July: Got up late with a sore throat. Did nothing. The family from Sudakóvo [the Arsénevs' estate] arrived. Valérya was nicer than ever, but her frivolity and absence of care for anything serious is terrifying. Am afraid hers is a

nature that cannot even love a child. However I spent the day very pleasantly.

13th July: . . . They teased Valérya to tears about the coronation. She was not at all to blame, but I felt uncomfortable and won't go there again for a long time. Or perhaps it was that she showed me too much friendship. I am afraid of marriage as well as of baseness, i.e. of amusing myself with her. But to marry, much would have to be changed and I have still much work to do on myself. Returned late.

'Much would have to be changed' suggests a passage in Chapter VI of *The Devil* where Mary Pávlovna (the hero's mother, who is to him what Auntie Tatiána was to Tolstóy) says:

'I wanted to tell you, Jénýa—of course I do not know, but in general I wanted to suggest to you that before your wedding it is absolutely necessary to have finished with all your bachelor affairs, so that nothing may disturb either you or your wife. God forbid that it should. You understand me? . . .'

'Mamma,' said Eugene suddenly, 'I know why you are saying this. You have no need to be disturbed. My future family-life is so sacred to me that I should not infringe it in any case. And as to what occurred in my bachelor days, that is quite ended. I never formed any union, and no one has any claims on me.'

28th July: . . . Went to the Arsénevs who had invited me. It is strange that I am beginning to like Valérya as a woman, when it was just as a woman that formerly she was distasteful to me. But this not always, only when I attune myself to it. Yesterday for the first time I looked at her arms, which used to disgust me.

In *The Devil* Tolstóy pictures what might have happened had he married Valérya and then again fallen under Aksénýa's spell; and his acute observation of physical characteristics and retentive memory are evident. For instance, before the hero in the story married we are told that his intended was 'tall, slender, and long. Everything about her was long; her face, and her nose—not prominently but downwards—and her fingers, and her feet.' After their marriage, when he again noticed Stepanída's strong and active body, legs, arms, and

shoulders, Liza, his wife, 'met him with shining face. But to-day somehow she seemed particularly pale, yellow, long, and weak', and later on when Stepanída—'broad, energetic, ruddy, and merry'—was dancing with other peasant women, Liza accompanied the old ladies up to the ring, 'in a light blue dress, with light ribbons on her head, and with wide sleeves under which her long white arms and angular elbows were visible'.

12th August: Went to the Arsénevs' at ten to take leave. She was unusually simple and nice. I should like to know, am I in love or not? . . .

He had gone to 'take leave' as the Arsénevs were going to Moscow for Alexander II's coronation.

On 23rd August, having read a letter Valérya wrote to his Auntie Tatiána which disgusted him, he wrote to the 'Young Ladies of Sudakóvo', at Moscow, as follows:

Is it possible that a currant-pattern dress *de toute beauté*, *haute volée* and Court aides-de-camp will always be for you the height of all happiness? Really this is cruel! Why did you write it? You knew how it would rub me the wrong way. . . . You must have been horrid in the currants *de toute beauté* and are certainly a million times better in travelling dress.

To love high society rather than a man is dishonourable and also dangerous, for in that sort of society more rubbish is met with than in any other, and you even place yourself at a disadvantage, for you yourself are not high society, and so your relations with it, based on a pretty little face and a currant-pattern dress, cannot be very pleasant or dignified—*dignes*. As for the Court aides-de-camp—there are in all some forty of them and I know positively that there are only two who are not scamps and fools, so there is no pleasure to be got there either. How glad I am that your currant-pattern dress was crushed at the parade, and how stupid it was of that unknown baron to save you. In his place I would gladly have been transformed into the crowd and crushed your currants on the white dress. I say this because you were certainly not in any serious danger. It was only Pickwick (whose story you have not read) who nearly perished at a parade; but that a young lady who goes to a coronation to study music should perish from such an innocent and pleasant amusement as a

parade, is a thing I never heard of in my life and so it cannot have happened. Here in the country the weather is wonderful, and to-day I went hunting from six in the morning to eight at night and enjoyed myself as no *Ober-fourrier de la chambre* [a Court official] or young lady in any sort of damask dress could succeed in doing. So though I should much like to come to Moscow to vex myself looking at you, I will not come, but wishing you all possible showy pleasures with their usual bitter endings, I remain your most humble and most unpleasant servant

Count L. Tolstóy.

Avec des sentiments distingués—excuse my having forgotten to employ that charming expression, which has so much sense.

No, joking apart, if you forgive me for this letter you are a kind creature. Please, Mlle Vergani, plead my cause.

After the Arsénevs returned to the country Tolstóy notes in his Diary on 25th September:

Went to see the Arsénevs. Valérya is sweet but, alas, simply stupid—that's where the shoe pinches.

29th September: . . . They led the conversation up to Mortier [a music master in Moscow] and it turns out that she is in love with him. Strange, it offended me. I felt ashamed for myself and for her, but for the first time experienced something like feeling for her.

1st October: What if I have not yet known love, then, judging by this small beginning which I feel now, I shall experience it with terrible force, and God forbid that it should be for Valérya. She is terribly shallow, without principle, and cold as ice, so is always being carried away. . . .

An entry in his Diary on 13th October: 'Am quite at ease about K.' is perhaps an indication that he had completely broken off with Aksénia.

24th October: . . . Went to a ball. Valérya was charming. I am almost in love with her.

28th October: In the morning wrote letters to D. Ars. and went to Valérya's. She had had her hair done up in a terrible fashion and wore a purple mantle *for me*. I felt pained and ashamed and spent a sad day. Conversation did not go. Yet quite involuntarily I was in the position of a sort of *fiancé*. That irritated me.

In his letters to Valérya Tolstóy describes himself as being made up of a 'silly man' who is in love with her and wishes to marry her, and a 'wise man' who knows that they do not yet understand one another and that no good can come of an impulsive engagement.

Writing from Moscow on 2nd November he says:

... In you I already love your beauty but I am only beginning to love what is eternal in you and always precious—your heart, your soul. Beauty can be recognized and loved in an hour and un-loved again just as quickly, but one has to learn to know the soul. Believe me nothing on earth comes without labour, not even love—the most beautiful and natural of feelings. Forgive a stupid comparison, to love as the silly man does is like playing a sonata without keeping time, without accents, with the pedal constantly down, but with feeling—not giving pleasure either to oneself or to others. But in order to yield oneself to the feeling of music one must first control oneself, labour, work—and believe me there is no pleasure in life to be had casually. Everything is obtained by work and hardship. But the severer the work and hardship the higher the reward. And we have before us an enormous work—to understand one another and maintain our love and respect for one another. Do you really think that if we yielded to the silly man's feeling we should now understand one another? It would seem to us that we did, but afterwards we should perceive a great chasm, and having spent our feeling on silly love-making we should have nothing with which to fill that gulf.

Further he writes:

Please, *walk* every day, whatever the weather may be. That is excellent, as every doctor will tell you. Also wear your stays, and put on your stockings yourself, and generally make improvements of that kind in yourself. Do not despair of becoming perfect. But these are all trifles. The chief thing is—live so that when you go to bed you can say to yourself: to-day (1) I did good to some one, (2) I myself began to live a little better. Try *please, please*, to plan the day's occupations in advance and check them off in the evening, and you will see what a tranquil and great pleasure it is to say each day to oneself: to-day I have been better than yesterday. To-day [in music practice] I managed to do my threes against fours very smoothly, or I understood and appreciated a good work

of poetry or of art, or, best of all, I did good to some one and made him love and thank God for me. . . .

A turning point in his relations with her is indicated in the Diary on 4th November:

Kóstinka made me feel depressed about Valérya. I think less about her, but feel an inexpressible dejection wherever I am.

On 8th November from Petersburg he wrote her:

DEAR VALÉRYA VLADÍMIROVNA,

'What has been will come not again', says Púshkin. Believe me, nothing is forgotten, or passes away, or recurs. Never again shall I experience that quiet feeling of attachment to you, of respect and of trust, which I felt before you went to the coronation. Then I gladly yielded to my feeling but now I fear it. Just now I wrote you a long letter which I decided not to send but will show you some later day. It was written under the influence of hatred of you. In Moscow a gentleman, who does not know you, told me that you were in love with Mortier, that you went to see him every day and that you correspond with him. . . .

I feel sad, dull, and depressed; everything is a failure, everything is unpleasant, but I will not on any account see you till I feel that the silly man's feeling has quite passed and that I fully believe in you, as I used to.

Next day, in a very different mood, he wrote expressing regret at having sent such a letter, and says:

How are you? Do you work? For Heaven's sake write to me. Do not laugh at the word 'work'. To *work* wisely, usefully, in order to do good, is excellent, but even to work at trifles, to shave a stick, to do anything, is the first condition of a natural, good life and therefore of happiness. For instance, I *worked* to-day, my conscience is at rest, I feel a small but proud self-satisfaction and so feel that I am good. To-day I should on no account have written you such an angry letter as I did yesterday. To-day I have a kindly feeling towards the whole world, and have for you the feeling I should like always to have. Ah, if you could feel—could reach by suffering as I have done—the conviction that the only possible, the only true, eternal, and highest happiness is obtained by three things: work, self-abnegation, and love. I know this, I carry

the conviction in my soul, but I live in accord with it only some two hours in the year; but you with your honest nature would yield yourself up to that conviction as you give yourself up to people, to Mlle Vergani and others. But for two people to be united in that conviction would be the highest bliss. . . .

You see, I so wish to love you that I teach you how to make me do so. And really the chief feeling I have for you is not love, but a passionate desire to love you with all my strength. . . .

Tolstóy had invented a story in which he called himself Khrapovítski and Valérya, Dembítskaya, and on 12th November, still from Petersburg, he writes to her:

. . . I will write you about the Khrapovítskis' future way of life—should they be destined ever to live on earth.

The way men and women live depends on (1) their inclination, and (2) their means. Consider the one and the other. Khrapovítski is morally an old man, who in youth committed many follies for which he paid by the loss of the happiness of the best years of his life, and he has now found his path and vocation in literature. In his soul he despises *Society*, adores a quiet family moral life, and dreads nothing on earth so much as distracting society life, in which all good honourable and pure thoughts and feelings are lost and one becomes the slave of social conventions and of one's creditors.

He has already paid for such errors with the best years of his life, so that in him this conviction is not a matter of words but a conviction ingrained by suffering. Dear Mlle Dembítskaya has not as yet experienced anything of this; for her, happiness consists in balls, bare shoulders, a carriage, diamonds, acquaintance with chamberlains, adjutants-general, &c. But it so happened that Kh. and Demb. seem to be in love with one another. (Perhaps I am deceiving myself, but at this moment I love you terribly.) So these people with contradictory inclinations seem to be in love with one another. How can they arrange so as to be able to live together? First, they must make concessions to one another. Secondly, the one whose inclinations are less moral must make most concessions. I should be willing to spend my whole life in the country. I should have three occupations: love of D. and care for her happiness, literature, and estate-management as I understand it—that is, fulfilling my duty to the people entrusted to me. One thing is bad about this. I should involuntarily lag behind the times and that is wrong. D. dreams

of living in Petersburg, going to thirty balls during the winter, entertaining fine friends and driving on the Névski in her own carriage. The mean between these two demands is to live five months in Petersburg without balls, without a carriage, without wonderful toilettes with *guipure* and *point d'Alençon* lace, and quite without 'society', and to live for seven months in the country. Khrapovítski has an income of 2,000 rubles from his estate (that is, if he does not as everybody does squeeze the last farthing from his unfortunate serfs); he has also about 1,000 rubles a year from his writings (but this not certainly; he may grow stupid or be unhappy, and not write anything). D. has a disputed promissory note for 20,000 rubles, from which, if it is met, she will get about 800 rubles interest: altogether they have at best, 3,800 rubles. Do you know what 3,800 rubles means in Petersburg? To live on that sum for five months in Petersburg one must put up with four rooms on the fifth floor and have not a *chef* but a woman-cook, not dare to think of having a carriage, or a poplin dress with *point d'Alençon* lace, or a light-blue bonnet—for such a bonnet *jurera* [will jar] with the rest of one's get-up. With that income one could live in Túla or Moscow and even now and then show off before the Lazarévichs—but many thanks for that! One might also live in Petersburg on a third floor, have a carriage and *point d'Alençon* lace, and hide from one's creditors and dressmakers and shopkeepers and write to the village to say that all I had arranged about lightening the peasants' burdens was nonsense, and that the utmost is to be squeezed out of them, and then return to the country and sit there in shame for years, angry with one another—but again many thanks for that! I have experienced it. There is another way of living on the fifth floor (poorly but honourably) spending what one can on domestic comfort, on the decoration of the little flat on the fifth floor, on a man-cook and the kitchen, and on wine, so that one's friends may enjoy coming to that fifth floor—and on books, music, pictures, concerts, and quartets at home, but not on any external luxury to astonish Lazarévichs, serfs, and blockheads. . . .

On 17th November, still from Petersburg, he writes:

You know my habit of doubting everything, which arises not from my character but from a certain mental development. Be sure that nothing is got for nothing. If I understand more than Gimbút [a neighbour in the country] does,

I no longer possess his freshness of feeling. I involuntarily see *pros* and *cons* in everything. I doubt everything in the world, except that goodness is good, and by that alone I can be led as on a string. . . . Moral goodness, that is, love of one's fellow man, poetry, beauty—which are all the same—is the one thing I never doubt and always worship, though I scarcely ever practise it. And I may be attracted by you because it seems to me that you are *good*, as I understand the word. But to you this philosophy seems dull. . . .

Note in passing that in this letter Tolstóy accepts 'moral goodness, that is, love of one's fellow man, poetry, and beauty' as being identical—a view he rejected later.

The letter goes on:

You make passing mention of having read something with pleasure. What was it you read with pleasure? And what did you make of it? This interests me extremely. It would not be bad for you to go to the . . . ball. It should be of interest to put yourself to the test. Do this . . ., and write me your impressions sincerely. I have hardly tested myself at all, that is, I have met no women and have been nowhere, and *la main sur la conscience* I can say that these three weeks no woman has attracted my attention at all. But with your chief rival—literature—I have been much and pleasantly occupied all this time. I have written a short story for the *Library Magazine* and am preparing another for the *Fatherland Notes*. . . . I have a nice quiet flat with a piano, and my N.N. pens scrape from morning to night.

On 22nd November he notes:

Got up at eleven. Wished to write but couldn't. Gymnastics. Dined at the Panáevs'. Then stayed at Kraévski's till evening. The literary atmosphere disgusts me as nothing else ever did. Wrote to Valérya. Thought much about her. Perhaps because I have not met any woman all this time.

23rd November: . . . Had a nice letter from Valérya. Answered her: thought about Anna Nikoláevna and at the same time very very much about Valérya. . . .

In this letter he said:

In your excellent supplement to the Khrapovítski's plan of life it is not good that you wish to live in the country and to

go to Túla. God forbid! . . . The Khrapovítskis will either see nobody or the best society in all Russia, that is, best not in the sense of the Tsar's favour or of wealth, but of intellect and culture. Their rooms will be on the fourth floor, but the most remarkable people in Russia will come there. God forbid that they should on that account be rude to Túla acquaintances and relations, but they should be avoided—they are not wanted, and, as I have said, intercourse with people who are not wanted is always harmful. Alas! you are mistaken in supposing that you have taste; or perhaps you have, but not tact. For instance, a certain style of dress, such as a light-blue bonnet with white flowers is excellent, but it suits a young lady who drives with fast trotters in English harness and ascends a staircase with mirrors and camellias, but with the modest surroundings of the fourth floor flat and a hackney cab, and so forth, such a bonnet is ridiculous—and still more so in the country and with a country conveyance. . . .

There is another kind of *élégance*, modest, afraid of anything extraordinary or glaring, but very particular about details, such as shoes, collars, gloves, cleanliness of nails, neatness of the hair, &c., about which I stand firm as a rock—so long as it does not take too much attention from serious matters—and which no one who cares for refinement can help liking. A taste for glaring colours is excusable though ridiculous in a plain girl, but for you with your pretty face it is unpardonable to make such a mistake. In your place I should take simplicity as the rule for my toilette, but with strictest refinement in all its details.

27th November: Had a stupid letter from Valérya. She humbugs herself and I see through it and that is trying. If people could but know one another so as not to accept the other's thought direct, but to see how it acts on the other. . . .

On 28th November he wrote her:

Yesterday I was at Olga Turgénev's and heard Beethoven's trio there, which is still in my ears. It is enchanting! . . . Since I left you nothing has occurred that I could not tell you of, and I do tell and shall tell everything that can interest you. That is just what I most love in my relations with you—that they help me on the path towards all that is good. What you ask me about priests reminds me of something I have long wished to say to you. Whatever our future relations may be, *let us never talk about religion and all that concerns it.* You know

that I am a believer, but very likely my faith differs from yours, and this question should never be touched, especially between those who wish to love one another. . . . Religion is a great thing, especially for a woman, and you have it. Keep it, never talk about it, and without exaggerating fulfil its precepts. Occupy yourself more and more, accustom yourself to work. That is the first condition of happiness in life.

This remark about not discussing religious matters is quite unlike Tolstóy's later attitude, but we find a key to it in an entry in his Diary on the preceding 14th August. 'Had a discussion with Auntie about religion. Useless. Must remember this with my future wife.'

On 6th December he wrote to his Auntie Tatiana:

Moscow. 6th December 1856.

. . . Just when I went away and for a week after that, it seemed to me that I was in love, as it is called, but for a man of my imagination that was not difficult. But now, and since then, especially since I set to work industriously, I should like, and should much like, to be able to say that I am in love, or simply love her, but it is not so. The one feeling I have for her is gratitude for her love and also the thought that of all the girls I have known or now know she would have made the best wife for me as I think of family life.

On 12th December he notes: 'Had a pained letter from Valérya and to my shame am glad of it.' The next two days he notes that 'I feel very sad', and, 'Wrote a last letter to Valérya'. It was however not the last, for on 1st January he notes: 'Wrote a short and stiff letter to Valérya.' This was, in fact, a friendly but not loving letter, written from Petersburg. In it he says:

How can I tell you how I spent the time of my silence? Wearily and for the most part sadly—I don't myself know why. Loneliness I find hard to bear, but contact with people is impossible. I am myself bad, yet am accustomed to be exacting. Besides that I have done nothing all the time and this depresses me. I have heard a great deal of music, and yesterday I even saw the New Year in while listening to Beethoven's trio, the most delightful in the world, and I thought of you and the effect it would have had on you.

I will send you the music of it—very good music—as soon as the shop opens to-morrow.

In reply she wrote forbidding him to write to her again; but he wrote again nevertheless, saying that he felt he had been to blame, but had been perfectly sincere with her and would never cease to love her as he did, that is, in friendship; that he was going to Paris and if she would write him a few lines there he would be calm and happy.

On 3rd January, following this break in his relations with Valérya, comes an entry:

Dined at Bótkin's . . . towards midnight to the masquerade. At first it was dull, then at supper with Stolýpin and Stakhóvich a 'sweet mouth' approached me. I solicited it for a long time, it came with me, and at home was very reluctant to unmask. As like A. D. as two peas but older and coarser featured. . . .

In Paris on 19th February he notes: 'Received a letter from Valérya' and next day he wrote her a letter saying:

Your letter, which I received to-day, dear Valérya Vladimirovna, made me very glad. It showed me that you do not regard me as some kind of villain or monster, but simply as a man with whom you nearly came into more intimate relations, and for whom you still feel friendship and respect. . . . I always told you that I did not know what my feeling for you was and that it always seemed to me that something was wrong. At one time, before I left the country, my loneliness, frequent meetings with you, and above all your lovely appearance and especially your character, made me almost ready to believe that I was in love with you; but something always told me that it was *not the thing*, as I did not conceal from you, and I even went to Petersburg on that account. There I led a solitary life but for all that, the mere fact of not seeing you showed me that I never was or should be in love with you. And to make a mistake in that matter would have been a misfortune both for me and for you. That is the whole story. It is true that such frankness was misplaced. I might have experimented on myself without attracting you; but in this matter I paid the price of inexperience, I repent of it,

ask your forgiveness for it, and it torments me, but I cannot be reproached with dishonourable conduct or even with secretiveness.

. . . The French, to my great astonishment, play Beethoven divinely, and you can imagine how I enjoy myself listening to this *musique d'ensemble*, performed by the best artists in the world. . . .

Family Happiness, published in 1859, is largely based on Tolstóy's relations with Valérya, he even introduces the device he had practised in his explanations with her, making the hero speak of a man A. and 'a woman we may call B.' and attributing to them the thoughts and feelings of the two who discuss them. But in the story the hero and heroine marry and suffer from their differing outlooks on life—though eventually they settle down to a life of calm content, emancipated from the passionate love they had felt.

To conclude the story of his relations with Valérya, I will here anticipate by quoting a letter he wrote later, on 17th April 1857, from Paris to his Aunt Tatiána:

I never loved her with real love, but was carried away by the reprehensible pleasure of inspiring love in her, which gave me a delight I had never before experienced. But the time spent away from her proved to me that I did not feel any wish to see her, still less to marry her. The very thought of the obligations I should have to perform towards her without loving her terrified me; so I decided to come away sooner than I had intended. I have behaved badly. I have asked God to forgive me, and I ask the same of all whom I have grieved, but to mend the matter is impossible, and nothing in the world can renew it now.

Tolstóy was ill at Yásnaya, and early in September wrote to his brother Sergéy:

Only now, at nine o'clock on Monday evening, can I give you a satisfactory reply, for till now things went worse and worse. Two doctors were called in and administered another forty leeches, but only now have I had a good sleep and on waking feel considerably better. All the same there can be no question of my leaving the house for five or six days yet.

So *au revoir*; please let me know when you go shooting, and whether it is true that your farming has been seriously neglected; and do not kill all the game without me. I will send the dogs, perhaps, to-morrow.

In Petersburg Tolstóy had other difficulties, and on 10th November writes to his brother Sergéy:

Forgive me, dear friend Serëzha, for only writing two words—I have no time for more. I have been most unlucky since I left home; there is no one here I like. It seems that I have been abused in the *Fatherland Notes* for my war stories—I have not yet read the attack—but the worst is that Konstantínov [the General who commanded the battery to which Tolstóy had been attached] informed me as soon as I got here that the Grand Duke Michael, having learnt that I am supposed to have composed the Soldiers' Song, is displeased, particularly at my having (as rumour says) taught it to the soldiers. This is abominable. I have had an explanation with the Head of the Staff. The only satisfactory thing is that my health is good, and [Dr.] Schipulínski says my lungs are thoroughly sound.

On 20th November 1856 he left the army. He had become Sub-Lieutenant after the Danube campaign and Lieutenant after the battle of Chérnaya, but despite the fact that he had private influence enough to enable him, about this time, to save from trial by court-martial the commander of the battery in which he had served, he had himself made very slow progress throughout his military service.

We have two letters of this period from Turgénev. The first is dated Paris, 16th November 1856, and is as follows:

DEAREST TOLSTÓY,

Your letter of 15th October took a whole month crawling to me—I received it only yesterday. I have thought carefully about what you write me—and I think you are wrong. It is true I cannot be quite sincere because I can't be quite frank with you. I think we got to know each other awkwardly and at a bad time, and when we meet again it will be much easier and smoother. I feel that I love you as a man (as an author it needs no saying); but much in you is trying to me and I

ultimately found it better to keep at a distance. When we meet we will again try to go hand in hand—perhaps we shall succeed better; for strange as it may sound, my heart turns to you when at a distance as to a brother, I even feel tenderly towards you. In a word, I love you—that is certain; perchance from that in time all good will follow. I heard of your illness and grieved, but now I beg of you drive the thought of it out of your head. For you, too, have your fancies and are perhaps thinking of consumption—but, God knows, you have nothing of the sort. . . .

You have finished the first part of *Youth*—that is capital. How sorry I am to be unable to hear it read! If you do not go astray (which I think there is no reason to anticipate) you will go very far. I wish you good health, activity—and freedom, spiritual freedom.

As to my *Faust*, I do not think it will please you very much. My things could please you and perhaps have some influence on you, only until you became independent. Now you have no need to study me; you see only the difference of our manners, the mistakes and the omissions; what you have to do is to study man, your own heart, and the really great writers. I am a writer of a transition period—and am of use only to men in a transition state. So farewell, and be well. Write to me.

On 8th December 1856 he writes again:

DEAR TOLSTÓY,

Yesterday my good genius led me past the post-office, and it occurred to me to ask if there were any letters for me at the *poste-restante* (though I think my friends ought all long ago to have learnt my Paris address) and I found your letter in which you speak of my *Faust*. You can well imagine how glad I was to read it. Your sympathy gladdened me truly and deeply. Yes, and from the whole letter there breathes a mild, clear, and friendly peacefulness. It remains for me to hold out my hand across the 'ravine', which has long since become a hardly perceptible crack of which we will speak no more—it is not worth it.

I fear to speak of one thing you mention: it is a delicate matter—words may blight such things before they are ripe, but when they are ripe a hammer will not break them. God grant that all may turn out favourably and well. It may bring you the spiritual repose you lacked when I knew you.

You have, I see, now become very intimate with Druzhínin—and are under his influence. That is right, only take care not to swallow too much of him. When I was your age only men of enthusiastic natures influenced me; but you are built differently and perhaps also the times are changed. . . . Let me know in which numbers of the *Contemporary* your *Youth* will appear, and by the way, let me know the final impression made on you by *Lear*, which probably you have read if only for Druzhínin's sake.

About the same time Turgénev wrote to Druzhínin:

I hear that you have become very intimate with Tolstóy—and he has become very pleasant and serene. I am very glad. When that new wine has finished fermenting it will yield a drink fit for the Gods. What about his *Youth*, which was sent for your verdict?

Before quoting Druzhínin's criticism of *Youth*, it will be in place to mention the other works of Tolstóy which appeared at this period. *Reminiscences of a Billiard Marker*, giving a glimpse of temptations Tolstóy to some extent had himself experienced, was published in January 1855, while he was in Sevastopol. In January 1866 came *Sevastopol in August*. In March 1856 *The Snow Storm*. In May 1856 a rollicking tale with flashes of humour resembling Charles Lever's, entitled *Two Hussars*. It is the only story Tolstóy wrote in that particular vein, and we have in it a glimpse of such gipsy singers as he repeatedly mentioned in his correspondence and in his books. In November he notes in his Diary:

How I long to have done with magazines, in order to write in the way I am now beginning to think about—terribly high and pure.

In December before he went abroad, two more tales were published: *Meeting a Moscow Acquaintance in the Detachment*, which has already been mentioned, and *A Landlord's Morning*, drawn from his experience when trying to better his serfs' condition. Their stolidity, their distrust, and the immense difficulty of introducing the changes he desired, are all brought out.

In a letter to Druzhínin, Turgénev wrote:

I have read his *Landlord's Morning*, which pleased me exceedingly by its sincerity and almost complete freedom of outlook. I say 'almost' because in the way he has set himself the task there still is hidden (without his perhaps being aware of it) a certain amount of prejudice. The chief moral impression produced by the story (leaving the artistic impression aside) is that so long as serfdom exists there is no possibility of the two sides drawing together despite the most disinterested and honourable desire to do so; and this impression is good and true. But beside it, like a horse cantering beside a trotter, there is another: namely, that in general to try to enlighten or improve the condition of the peasants leads to nothing, and this impression is unpleasant. But the mastery of language, the way it is told, and his character-drawing, are grand.

In January 1857 the first part of *Youth* appeared—a continuation of *Childhood* and *Boyhood*.
 1857 Druzhínin's influence with Tolstóy at this time may be judged by the tone of the letter in which he gave him his opinion on *Youth*. He writes:

About *Youth* one ought to write twenty pages. I read it with anger, with yells, and with oaths—not on account of its literary quality but because of the quality of the notebooks in which it is written, and the handwritings. The mixing of two hands, a known and an unknown, diverted my attention and hindered an intelligent perusal. It was as though two voices shouted in my ear and purposely distracted my attention, and I know this has prevented my receiving an adequate impression. All the same I will say what I can. Your task was a terrible one, and you have executed it very well. No other writer of our day could have so seized and sketched the agitated and turbulent period of youth. To those who are developed, your *Youth* will furnish an immense pleasure, and if any one tells you it is inferior to *Childhood* and *Boyhood* you may spit in his face. There is a world of poetry in it—all the first chapters are admirable, only the introduction is dry till one reaches the description of spring. . . . In many chapters one scents the poetic charm of old Moscow which no one has yet reproduced properly. Some chapters are dry and long: for instance all the stipulations with Dmítri Nekhlúdob. . . . The conscription of Seménov will not pass the Censor.

Do not fear your reflections, they are all clever and original. But you have an inclination to super-refinement of analysis which may become a great defect. You are sometimes on the point of saying that so-and-so's thigh indicated that he wished to travel in India. You must restrain this tendency, but do not extinguish it on any account. All your work on your analyses should be of the same kind. Each of your defects has its share of strength and beauty, and almost every one of your qualities bears with it the seed of a defect.

Your style quite accords with that conclusion: you are most ungrammatical, sometimes with the lack of grammar of a reformer and powerful poet reshaping a language his own way and for ever, but sometimes with the lack of grammar of an officer sitting in a casemate and writing to his chum. One can say with assurance that all the pages you have written with love are admirable—but as soon as you grow cold your words get entangled and diabolical forms of speech appear. Therefore the parts written coldly should be revised and corrected. I tried to straighten out some bits but gave it up; it is work which only you can and must do. Above all avoid long sentences. Cut them up into two or three; do not be sparing of full-stops. . . . Do not stand on ceremony with the particles, and strike out by dozens the words: *which*, *who*, and *that*. When in difficulties, take a sentence and imagine that you want to say it to some one in a most conversational way.

As a translator I can testify that Tolstóy never fully learned the lesson Druzhínin here set him. To the very last he occasionally intermingled passages of extraordinary simplicity and force, with sentences that defy analysis and abound in redundances.

Nearly fifty years later Tolstóy himself criticized the subject-matter of *Childhood*, *Boyhood*, and *Youth* as follows:

I have re-read them and regret that I wrote them, so ill, artificially, and insincerely, are they penned. It could not be otherwise: first, because what I aimed at was not to write my own history but that of the friends of my youth, and this produced an awkward mixture of the facts of their and my own childhood; and secondly, because at the time I wrote it I was far from being independent in my way of expressing myself, being strongly influenced by two writers: Sterne (his *Sentimental Journey*) and Töpffer (his *Bibliothèque de Mon Oncle*).

I am now specially dissatisfied with the two last parts,

Boyhood and Youth, in which besides an awkward mixture of truth and invention, there is also insincerity: a desire to put forward as good and important what I did not then consider good and important, namely, my democratic tendency.

Before concluding this chapter it will be in place to give a list of works Tolstóy mentions as having influenced him after he left the University and before his marriage. They were: Goethe's *Hermann und Dorothea*; Hugo's *Notre-Dame de Paris*; Plato's *Phaedo* and the *Symposium* (in Cousin's French translation); and the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* in Russian versions. All these, he says, had a 'very great' influence on him, while the poems of his compatriots, Tyúchev, Kóltsov, and his friend Fet had 'great' influence.

As previously mentioned even in early childhood he had appreciated some of Púshkin's poems and learned them by heart and recited them with feeling; but, curiously enough, it was the perusal of Mérimée's French prose translation of Púshkin's *Gipsies* that, after he was grown up, aroused Tolstóy's keen admiration of Púshkin's mastery of clear, simple, direct language. Later in life Tolstóy used to say that Púshkin's prose stories, such as *The Captain's Daughter*, are his best works, but he never lost his appreciation of Púshkin's poetic gift.

On 3rd June 1856 he notes in his Diary:

Read Púshkin's *Don Juan*. Enchanting. Truth and power I never expected.

4th June: Got up at five, went for a walk with, I confess, very erotic feelings. Read Púshkin's first poems. . . .

7th June: Read the second and third parts of Púshkin. *The Gipsies* are as delightful as when I first read them, and the rest of the poems, except *Onégin*, are dreadful rubbish.

4th January 1857: Got up after one. The article [by Belinski] on Púshkin is wonderful. Only now have I understood Púshkin. I am decidedly happy all these days. I am intoxicated by the rapidity of the moral movement—forward and forward.

The 'moral movement' referred to is evidently not his own personal progress, for in the preceding entry he

had recorded his conduct, of which he certainly did not approve, at a masquerade. He is speaking of the emancipation movement and other reforms then in progress.

Of non-Russian writers, he mentions Dickens with special approval. He read *Little Dorrit* and *Pickwick*. 'Finished reading *The Pickwick Papers*. Very good!' In his Note-book he wrote:

(1) The first condition of an author's popularity, the prime means to make people like him, is the love with which he treats his characters. That is why Dickens's characters are the friends of all mankind: they are a bond of union between man in America and man in Petersburg.

(2) It is well when an author stands only just outside his subject, so that one continually doubts whether the treatment is subjective or objective.

He also read Molière, whom he esteemed very highly, and says: 'Heard the splendid comedy *Les Femmes Savantes* read.'

Of Thackeray at this time he read *The Newcomes*, but does not comment either on it or on him.

Of Prosper Mérimée he says: 'Finished reading *Carmen*. Weak, French!' Of Auerbach, whom he was to meet later in Germany, he says: 'From two to eight in the morning read Auerbach's delightful *Befehle*.'

A literary event of this year was the appearance of Druzhínin's translation of *King Lear*. Tolstóy thought the translation good, but disliked the play and Shakespeare generally. He notes: 'Read *Henry IV*, and was furious with the *Contemporary*' (which had no doubt praised it). 'Read *Lear*; it moved me but little.' And a week later: 'Dined at Botkin's . . . Then to Ólga Turgénev. "*Lear* is delightful!" No, with Ólga I am always uncomfortable!' His reasons for dissenting from the general appraisal of Shakespeare were explained much later in his essay on *Shakespeare and the Drama* (included in *Tolstóy on Art*). He did not shrink from stating this opinion to his literary associates, and by so doing gave an early indication of a trait characteristic of him to the end of his life, namely, his distrust of

prevalent opinions and readiness to defy authority and rely on his own judgment, which is alluded to in Nekrásov's mention of Tolstóy as 'a strong and truthful personality with no secretiveness or timidity'.

Of Goethe Tolstóy notes: 'Read *Werther*. Enchanting.' But in general he did not much care for Goethe.

Among Russian writers he read were Goncharóv, and Ostróvski, Russia's most popular dramatist, of whom Tolstóy many years later said to Gúsev:

Ostróvski pleased me by his simple, Russian, way of life, his seriousness, and his great talent. He was an original, self-reliant man who, even in literary circles, curried favour with no one.

With the Slavophil group of writers Tolstóy felt no great sympathy. On 5th May he notes:

Spent the evening at Obolénski's with Aksákov, Kiréevski, and other Slavophils. It is evident that they are looking for an enemy who does not exist. Their outlook is too narrow and too far from reaching the quick to meet any resistance. There is no need of it.

21st May: Dined at Aksákov's. Made Komyakóv's acquaintance. An acute man. Disputed with Constantine Aksákov about village readings, which he considers impossible. In the evening at the Gorchakóvs disputed with Sergéy Dmítrievich [Gorchakóv] about exactly the opposite: Sergéy Dmítrievich was sure that the peasantry are the most depraved class. Of course, from a Western I became a hard-crusted Slavophil.

Tolstóy tells us that artistic talent in literature influenced him more than any political or social tendency, and this was in accord both with his highly artistic nature and his general apathy towards public affairs. There was a Slavophil theory (built to justify things as they were) which proclaimed it natural for a Slav people to leave the task of governing to its rulers, while retaining its intellectual freedom to disapprove of what was done amiss; and though Tolstóy never joined the Slavophils, this was very much his own attitude on the

matter, and was clearly expressed twenty years later in *Anna Karénina*.¹

Dostoévski was at this time still in exile in Siberia, and so Tolstóy did not meet him.

With Chernyshévski his relations were not cordial, and *The Kreutzer Sonata*, written much later, is in fact a counterblast to Chernyshévski's novel *What to Do?*

On 31st May 1856, while visiting his sister at her estate, a day's drive from Yásnaya Polyána, he notes:

At five in the morning rode to Turgénev's. Arrived at seven. He was not at home. His house showed me the roots from which he comes, and this explained much to me and reconciled me to him. He returned. I lunched, walked, had a very pleasant talk with him, and went to sleep. . . . Should like to write the story of a horse.

This was no doubt the occasion on which while walking with Turgénev they saw an old horse grazing in a meadow. Tolstóy began describing what the horse's feelings must be, and did it so convincingly that Turgénev remarked: 'I am sure, Lëo Nikoláevich, that you must have once been a horse yourself.'

On 12th March, after less than four months' acquaintance, Tolstóy noted in his Diary: 'I think I have parted with Turgénev for good,' but on 10th May he writes to his Auntie Tatiána that 'Turgénev has left, whom I now feel that I have grown very fond of, though we were always quarrelling'.

His conflicts with a number of the leading writers did not prevent his taking active interest in a 'Literary Fund' Druzhínin was founding to render assistance to necessitous authors and scientists. Tolstóy drafted a constitution for the Society, and helped it otherwise.

We find him eagerly skating, riding, dancing, playing chess, and especially ardent at gymnastic classes. There had been a time when it was his ambition to become the strongest man in the world, and his strength and skill

¹ *Anna Karénina*, vol. ii, pp. 423-30, 'World's Classics' series.

at all kinds of physical exercises was remarkable, and remained so to old age.

A pleasure and occupation of which he makes frequent mention was music, and he devoted much time to the piano. Here are a few notes on the subject from his Diary:

21st December: Got up at half-past seven, busy with proof corrections and music till two.

23rd December: Went to Kovalévski at the University. A wonderful symphony of Haydn's.

24th December: . . . Was going to Zhemichúznikov's, but Stolýpin invited me to some music, and Bótkin and I enjoyed ourselves.

In January 1857 he met Kiesewetter, a talented violinist and a composer, who had taken to drink. Tolstóy took him to Yásnaya Polyána, and later on studied music ardently with him and tried to set him on his feet, but Kiesewetter, who could not endure a regular life, disappeared from Yásnaya and perished.

The incident inspired the story *Albert*, which was published in August 1858.

Despite his headstrong outbursts and many vacillations Tolstóy seems to have been a welcome guest in almost any society he cared to frequent, and none of his critics has spoken as harshly of him as he speaks of himself when describing these years in the *Recollections* he wrote when he was an old man, and referred to his terrible twenty years of coarse dissipation, the service of ambition, vanity, and above all of lust. . . . It is true that not all my life was so terribly bad as this twenty-year period from fourteen to thirty-four; and it is true that even that period of my life was not the continuous evil that during a recent illness it appeared to me to be. Even during those years strivings towards goodness awoke in me though they did not last long and were soon choked by passions nothing could restrain.

In his *Confession*, written about 1880, when speaking of his religious beliefs, Tolstóy tells us:

With all my soul I wished to be good, but I was young, passionate, and alone, completely alone when I sought goodness. Every time I tried to express my most sincere desire,

namely, to be morally good, I met with contempt and ridicule; but as soon as I yielded to nasty passions I was praised and encouraged.

Ambition, love of power, covetousness, lasciviousness, pride, anger and revenge—were all respected. . . . I cannot think of those years without horror, loathing and heartache. I killed men in war, and challenged men to duels in order to kill them; I lost at cards, consumed the labour of the peasants, sentenced them to punishments, lived loosely, and deceived people. Lying, robbery, adultery of all kinds, drunkenness, violence, murder—there was no crime I did not commit, and people approved of my conduct and my contemporaries considered and consider me to be a comparatively moral man.

So I lived for ten years.

During that time I began to write from vanity, covetousness, and pride. In my writings I did the same as in my life. To get fame and money, for the sake of which I wrote, it was necessary to hide the good and show the evil. And I did so. How often in my writings did I contrive to hide under the guise of indifference or even of banter those strivings of mine towards goodness which gave meaning to my life. And I succeeded in this and was praised.

At twenty-six years of age [Tolstóy makes a slip here: he was over twenty-seven] I returned to Petersburg after the war, and met the writers. They received me as one of themselves and flattered me. And before I had time to look round I had adopted the class views on life of the authors I had come among, and these views completely obliterated all my former strivings to improve. Those views furnished a theory which justified the dissoluteness of my life. The view of life of these people, my comrades in authorship, consisted in this: that life in general goes on developing and in this development we—men of thought—have the chief part; and among men of thought it is we—artists and poets—who have the chief influence. Our vocation is to teach mankind. And lest the simple question should suggest itself: What do I know and what can I teach? it is explained in this theory that this need not be known and that the artist and poet teach unconsciously. I was considered an admirable artist and poet, and therefore it was very natural for me to adopt this theory. I, artist and poet, wrote and taught without myself knowing what. For this I was paid money; I had excellent food, lodging, women, and society; and I had fame, which showed that what I taught was very good.

CHAPTER VI

TRAVELS ABROAD

AFTER the Danube campaign of 1854 Tolstóy only left Russia twice. The first time was on 10th February 1857 1857 (new style) when he left Moscow by post-chaise for Warsaw (from whence a railway already ran), and reached Paris on 21st February. There he met Turgénev and Nekrásov, with the former of whom he was still unable to get on smoothly. Turgénev wrote: 'With Tolstóy I still cannot become quite intimate; we see things too differently.' Tolstóy in a moment of anger even challenged his fellow-writer to a duel, but Nekrásov succeeded in patching the matter up. For the first five weeks in Paris Tolstóy enjoyed himself greatly, was very active, and led a social life. He attended lectures by Laboulaye and other celebrities, visited Fontainebleau and various places of interest, made acquaintance with some leading singers and actresses, took lessons in English and Italian, and played chess at a café. He was much attracted by a Princess Trubetskóy and still more so by a Princess Lvón, but any thoughts of marriage he may have had did not prevent his going to cafés chantants, to the Bal de l'Opéra, to 'would-be-gay suppers', and otherwise misbehaving himself.

In March he accompanied Turgénev to Dijon and spent a few days there. During this trip Tolstóy began his story *Albert*, founded on his acquaintance with the violinist Kiesewetter, who was mentioned in the last chapter.

On 5th April he wrote to his friend V. P. Bótkin:

I have now been living in Paris nearly two months and do not foresee the time when the town will have ceased to interest me or this way of life will have lost its charm. I am crassly ignorant, nowhere have I felt so aware of it as here. If only for that reason there is every cause for me to rejoice

at being here, the more so since in this town I also feel that my ignorance is not irremediable. Moreover the fine arts give me such delight: the Louvre, Versailles, the Conservatoire, the concerts, the theatres, the lectures at the Collège de France and at the Sorbonne, above all this social liberty of which we have no idea in Russia—and the result of all this is that I shall hardly leave Paris, or the suburban village I expect to move to shortly, for another two months.

The very next day he saw a man guillotined and made the following entry in his Diary:

I got up at seven o'clock and went to see an execution. A stout, robust, white neck and breast: He kissed the Gospels and then—death. How senseless! I am not a man of politics. Morals and art I know, love, and can deal with. . . . The guillotine long prevented my sleeping and obliged me to reflect.

Tolstóy had always a gift of stating essential truths in few words, and never did he sum himself up better than in the sentences, 'I am not a man of politics. Morals and art I know, love, and can deal with'. There is not much room for doubt about the second sentence, and certainly none about the first, as his whole life shows.

Many years later he wrote of this event in his *Confession*:

When I saw the head part from the body and how they thumped separately into the box, I understood, not with my mind but with my whole being, that no theory of the reasonableness of our present progress could justify this deed, and that though everybody from the creation of the world, on whatever theory, had held it to be necessary, I knew it to be unnecessary and bad; and therefore the arbiter of what is good and evil is not what people say and do, nor is it progress, but is my heart and I.

The occurrence disgusted Tolstóy with Paris. The following day he notes:

Got up late and unwell. Read, and suddenly a simple and sensible idea occurred to me—to leave Paris.

That same day he wrote to Bótkin telling him of the execution and adding:

A lot of arrests were made here the other day, a conspiracy

has been discovered, they wanted to kill Napoleon at the theatre; more people will be killed in a few days' time, but certainly from to-day I will not merely never go to see it done, but I will never anywhere serve any government.

By the 9th of April he was in Geneva and hastened to call on his 'Aunts' Lisa and Alexandra Tolstóy, of whom mention has already been made. Their grandfather had twenty-three children by one wife. His eldest son was Count Ilyá Tolstóy, Tolstóy's paternal grandfather, and his youngest son, Andrey, was the father of Lisa and Alexandra. Tolstóy was therefore actually their first cousin once removed. In Russian they would be called his 'aunts'. He however called each of them 'Grandma', saying they were too young to be his aunts—a *paradoxe à la L. Tolstóy*, as Alexandra remarked. She was eleven years his senior, and a very close friendship—an *amitié amoureuse* in his own phrase—united them for many years. It was the best, purest, closest, and most charming friendship he had with any one outside his own immediate family circle.

She and her elder sister, Lisa, were Maids of Honour to the Grand Duchess Marie of Lichtenberg, daughter of Nicholas I. Countess Lisa Tolstóy was in charge of the education of the Grand Duchess's daughter, who eventually became Princess of Oldenburg. Subsequently, from 1866 onward, Alexandra had charge of the education of the Grand Duchess Marie Alexándrovna, the only daughter of Alexandra II. In 1876 her pupil married Alfred, Duke of Edinburgh, who afterwards became Duke of Saxe-Coburg.

In the Introduction to her published correspondence with Tolstóy, Alexandra says:

I see him quite clearly at the time of his return from Sevastopol in 1855 as a young artillery officer, and remember what a pleasant impression he made on us all. . . . He was himself simple, extremely modest, and so playful that his presence enlivened us all. He very seldom spoke of himself, but observed each new acquaintance intently and with concentration, and afterwards told us his impressions, which were

nearly always rather extreme. The nickname 'thin skin', bestowed on him later by his wife, exactly suited him, so strongly, favourably or unfavourably, did the slightest shade he observed act upon him. He guessed people's nature by artistic instinct and his impression often proved amazingly correct. He was not good-looking, but the appearance of his clever, kindly, and expressive eyes made up for what he lacked in elegance and, one may say, was better than beauty. . . .

She mentions Tolstóy's sudden arrival in Geneva, where she and her sister were in attendance on the Grand Duchess, and says:

Not being in correspondence with him at that time, we had no idea where he was and supposed him to be in Russia.

'I have come to you straight from Paris,' he announced. 'I became so disgusted with Paris that I almost went off my head. What have I not seen there. . . . First at the *maison garnie* where I stayed, there were thirty-six *ménages*, nineteen of which were irregular. That revolted me terribly. Then I wanted to test myself and went to see a criminal guillotined, after which I could not sleep and did not know what to do with myself. Fortunately I happened to hear that you were at Geneva, and have rushed headlong to you, feeling sure that you would save me.'

In fact after telling everything he soon calmed down, and we got on excellently, met every day, climbed the mountains, and enjoyed life thoroughly. The weather was wonderful, not to speak of the scenery. We delighted in it with the enthusiasm of dwellers on a plain, though Leo tried to moderate our ardour by assuring us that it was rubbish compared with the Caucasus.

Despite the difference in our up-bringing and position we had one characteristic in common. We were both terrible enthusiasts and analysers, who loved goodness, but did not know how to follow it properly.

They had a number of charming Russian acquaintances in the vicinity, and her story proceeds:

One morning a group of us set out on foot for Glion, well known as the highest point above Vevey. Our path was strewn with flowers literally and figuratively. The splendour of spring lay before our eyes and intoxicated us. As I remem-

ber we were all, regardless of age, like schoolchildren out on a spree. . . . Having climbed the mountain in the sweat of our brows, we found the public room in the only hotel there crowded with Englishmen, Americans, and all sorts of people.

After tea, disregarding the numerous public, Leo unceremoniously sat down to the piano and called on us to sing.

I may say without false modesty that I then had an excellent voice and devoted much time to music, and as it happened Mme Púshina also sang. She chimed in to my songs with her pure voice, and the two Michaels supplied the bass, while Leo assumed the rôle of conductor.

I do not know in how far our improvised concert was satisfactory from a strictly musical sense, but with the open windows and the wide view, all went off well and even poetically.

We sang *God save the Tsar*, Russian and Gipsy songs, in short whatever suggested itself to Leo. . . . We had a brilliant success. The foreigners overflowed with compliments and thanks—each in his own language, and implored us to continue. We evidently had met a felt want: first, as wandering musicians demanding no payment, and next perhaps by dispersing their customary spleen.

The following day the same thing happened at our *pension* [she was then staying with Tolstóy at Vevey]. *Orphée attendant les bêtes*. The stern Englishwomen there were so softened that they did not know how to express their friendliness—handing us chairs, treating us to sweets, and so on. . . .

When my leave of absence expired and I returned to Geneva . . . Leo remained at Vevey and reproached me with being unable to tear myself away from the Chimney (as he denominated the Court).

Tolstóy's substitution of the word *trubá* (chimney) for the similar-sounding word *dvorá* (Court) was, be it mentioned in passing, suggested by the fact that the most aristocratic girls' school in Petersburg was kept by a Mlle Terouba, so that the pupils of Terouba filled the Court.

After recounting various escapades he and his friends were up to, she continues:

In July we undertook a journey to Oberland with the Grand Duchess's children. We stopped for the first night in Vevey at Monet's hotel.

Hardly had we sat down to table before a waiter came to

inform me in a mysterious voice that some one wanted me downstairs. . . . Guessing what was up, I quickly descended to the large downstairs room, where I found them once again—wrapped in long cloaks, with feathers in their fantastic hats. Music was spread on the floor as is done by strolling players, and instruments were replaced by sticks. On my appearance an indescribable cacophony commenced, a real *tapage infernal* or cats' concert. Voices and sticks rivalled one another. I nearly died with laughing, and the Grand Duchess's children were inconsolable at having missed the performance.

Tolstóy soon settled at Clarens at the eastern end of the Lake of Geneva, and from there, on 18th May, he wrote to his Auntie Tatiána:

I have just received your letter, dear Aunt, which found me, as you must know from my last letter, at Clarens in the neighbourhood of Geneva, in the village where Rousseau's Julie lived. . . . I will not try to describe the beauty of this country, especially at present when all is in leaf and flower; I will only say that it is literally impossible to detach oneself from this lake and from these banks, and that I spend most of my time gazing and admiring while I walk, or simply sit at the window of my room.

I do not cease congratulating myself on the thought which made me leave Paris and come to pass the spring here, though I have thereby deserved your reproach for inconstancy. Truly I am happy, and begin to feel the advantage of having been born with a caul.

There is some charming Russian society here, the Púshkins, the Karamzíns and the Meschérskis; and they have all, Heaven knows why, taken to liking me; I feel it, and the month I have spent here I have been so nice and good and cosy that I am sad at the thought of leaving.

Among the excursions he undertook was a week's tour by way of Montreux, Les Avants, the Col de Jaman, Interlaken, Grindelwald, and Thun, with Sásha, the son of a Russian lady he knew.

Again and again in his Diary and letters Tolstóy's vivid delight in Nature shows itself in descriptions of the scenery:

It is wonderful, but I was at Clarens for two months, and every time—when in the morning and especially after dinner

towards evening—I opened the shutters on which the shadows were already falling and glanced at the lake and the distant blue of the mountains reflected in it, the beauty blinded me and acted on me with the force of a surprise.

But together with this keen appreciation, a sort of protest comes now and then that this grandiose Swiss mountain scenery is after all not the Nature that most appeals to him—a yearning for the vast steppes and forests of his native land. After ascending the Pass of Jaman and describing the magnificent scenery and the pleasure of the climb, he adds:

It was something beautiful, even unusually beautiful, but I do not love what are called magnificent and remarkable views: they are, as it were, cold. . . . I love Nature when though it surrounds me on all sides and extends unendingly, I am part of it. I love it when on all sides I am surrounded by hot air and that same air rolls away to unending distance and those same sappy leaves of grass which I crush as I sit on them form the green of the boundless meadows; when those same leaves, which fluttering in the wind run their shadows across my face, form also the dark blue of the distant forests, while the same air one breathes makes the deep, light blue of the immeasurable sky; when you do not exult and rejoice alone in Nature but around you myriads of insects buzz and whirl, and beetles clinging together creep about, and all around you birds overflow with song.

But this is a bare, cold, desolate, grey plateau, and somewhere afar there is something beautiful veiled in mist. But that something is so distant that I do not feel the chief delight of Nature—do not feel myself part of that endless and beautiful distance, it is foreign to me.

In June he went to Turin to join Druzhínin and Bótkin, returning partly on foot by way of St. Bernard.

On 1st July he started for Berne, on his way to Lucerne, which he reached on 6th July, and there the incident occurred that is recounted in his story *Lucerne*.

Countess Alexandra Tolstóy tells us that when she reached that town a few days after Tolstóy, she found him terribly excited and flaming with indignation.

This is what he told us had happened the previous evening.

An itinerant musician had played for a long time beneath the balcony of the Schweizerhof Hotel, where a considerable company of people were sitting. Every one enjoyed the performance, but when he raised his cap for a reward, no one threw him a single sou—an unpleasant fact, certainly, but one to which Tolstóy attributed almost criminal dimensions.

To retaliate on the smart public there assembled, he took the musician by the arm and, seating him at his own table, ordered supper and champagne for him. I hardly think the guests, or even the poor musician himself, quite appreciated the irony of this action. It characterized both the writer and the man. The impression the incident made on Tolstóy was so strong that it involuntarily communicated itself to others. Even the children were keenly interested in the adventure, and having grown fond of Tolstóy implored us to invite him to join our steamer and continue his journey with us, which was satisfactorily arranged. To this day they remember how he amused them, and what an incredible quantity of cherries he consumed.

In Tolstóy's Diary we find these entries:

15th July. Called at the Schweizerhof—the whole 'chimney'. The children are sweet and make up to one. To my shame, the smell of the 'chimney' pleases me.

18th July. I scarcely managed to finish *Lucerne* by writing from seven till half-past ten. Ran to them. Drove with them. Pleasant. An unpleasant moment when I did not know whether I might dine with them or not. . . . Fine illumination and music on the lake in the evening. Read *Lucerne* to them. Vavá asked me to feed him. The children are sweet.

19th July. Got up at 10.30. Bathed, ran to the Tolstoys. Found them just going away. Without reflection I prepared to go myself. Went by boat to Küssnacht, read Brontë.

He next proceeded to Zurich and Baden-Baden. On the way there, on 23rd July, he notes:

Most important, the idea occurred to me clearly and strongly of starting a school in my own village for the whole district, and of general activity of that kind.

This intention he carried out a little later, but on reaching Baden-Baden, famous for its gambling establishments, the temptation was too strong for him and

he lost all the money he had with him and even more. The comments in his Diary from the day he arrived are:

24th July. I was constantly running to the roulette. Lost a little.

25th July. Roulette from morning till night. Lost, but won at night.

26th July. Ill since morning. Roulette till six. Lost everything. Dined at home. Quite ill. In the evening looked on at all this depraved confusion pretty calmly, but am ill and weak.

27th July. Borrowed 200 rubles from the Frenchman, and lost. Wrote letters. Shall not play any more. Am calmer. . . . Polónski has no money. Awkward situation.

28th July. Woke up fresh. K. brought me some money. Went to the baths and then played and lost. Pig! I gadded about stricken and ashamed. Went to a doctor. Decided to take a week's cure, but it seems useless.

29th July. Got up late. . . . Did not play as I had no money. Bad, horrid! And this kind of life has gone on for a week.

31st July. Turgénev has arrived.

1st August. Borrowed money from Turgénev and lost it. It is long since anything tormented me so.

In his distress he again found comfort in the friendship of Alexandra Tolstóy, who, with the Grand Duchess, was travelling in the same direction as himself. He notes in his Diary:

3rd August. Reached Frankfurt. The Court. Demanded a lodging in the Darmstadt palace. Priceless Sásha [Alexandra Tolstóy]. A wonder! A delight! I never knew a better woman.

By 5th August he had reached Dresden, where he visited the picture gallery and noted in his Diary: 'The Madonna at once moved me deeply.' Through Berlin and by boat from Stettin to Petersburg, he reached Russia on 31st July (Russian style).

In his Diary he notes:

This is how on my journey I planned my future occupations: first literary work; next family duties; then estate management. But the estate I must leave as far as possible to the steward, softening him and making improvements, and

spending only 2,000 rubles a year and using the rest for the serfs. Above all, my stumbling-block is Liberal vanity. To live for oneself and do a good deed a day is sufficient.

Farther on he says: 'Self-sacrifice does not lie in saying "Take what you like from me", but in labouring and thinking, and contriving how to give oneself.'

He read in translation the *Iliad* and the Gospels at this time, both of which impressed him greatly. 'I have finished reading the indescribably beautiful end of the *Iliad*,' he notes, and he expresses regret that there is no connexion between those two wonderful works.

During his stay in western Europe he had been reading de Tocqueville and the political writings of Émile de Girardin, also *La Cousine Bette* by Balzac, of whose preface to the *Comédie Humaine* he remarks, 'shallow and self-satisfied'. After seeing the actress Ristori in Paris he comments:

A single poetic movement compensates for the falsity of five acts. Racine's drama and the like are Europe's poetic wound. Thank God we [Russians] have not got it and shall not have it.

But of Molière he says: '*Précieuses ridicules* and *L'Avare*—excellent.' Other authors he read were Las Casas (his *Mémorial de Ste-Hélène* probably) and 'a silly novel by About'; also the Swedish novelist, Fredrika Bremer ('a very bright, attractive talent though, as usual with women, too sugary'), Freytag's *Soll und Haben* ('poor'); a good deal of Charlotte Brontë; Hans Andersen, of whom he was very fond, and Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister*. He did not generally care for Goethe, but here remarks 'read enchanting Goethe', without mentioning any particular work.

He was not writing much himself, but worked from time to time at *Youth* and at *Albert* (which later he re-wrote several times) and under stress of feeling he produced *Lucerne* in a few days.

By the end of July he was in Petersburg, and a week later started for Yásnaya Polyána. On 8th August,

starting from Moscow at 5 a.m. and changing horses half-way, he reached home by 11 p.m. The entry in his Diary begins with four words of Púshkin:

'I greet thee my... ' delightful Yásnaya! Pleasant and sad, but Russia disgusts me and I feel how this coarse, lying life begins to encircle me on every side. At the station Zórin was being beaten and I wanted to intercede for him, but Vasili explained to me that one must first bribe the doctor. He told me many things of that kind; they beat and flog.

One gets glimpses of his occupations at Yásnaya from entries in the Diary:

The piano takes time. . . . Began letting the domestic serfs buy their freedom. . . . Few of the serfs wish to be released on quit-rent. . . . Increased the Elder's wages. Sensuality again torments me. Laziness, boredom, and sadness. Everything seems useless. The ideal is unattainable; I have already ruined myself. Work, a small reputation, money. What for? Means of enjoyment—again what for? Soon an eternal night. It always seems to me that I shall soon die. . . .

It is only now that I have understood that it is not the life around one that must be arranged symmetrically as one wants it, but that one must break oneself up, make oneself pliable, so as to adapt oneself to any life. . . .

From morning planted trees all day.

In October he accompanied his brother Nicholas and his sister Márya to Moscow, and then spent a few days in Petersburg, where he found that he had been forgotten by a world absorbed in the public reforms then impending:

Petersburg at first mortified me, but afterwards quite restored me. My reputation has fallen, or hardly squeaks, and I felt much grieved, but now I am tranquil. I know that I have something to say and the strength to utter it strongly, and the public may then say what it will. But I must work conscientiously, applying all my strength; then . . . 'Let them spit upon the altar'. [A quotation from Púshkin.]

He returned to Moscow and settled in furnished apartments with his sister and Nicholas. Fet was also there and in his *Recollections* makes frequent mention of the

Tolstóys. He tells us that the Countess Márya (an accomplished pianist) used to come to his house for music in the evenings, sometimes accompanied by both her brothers and sometimes by Nicholas alone, who would say:

‘Lëvochka [Leo] has again donned his evening clothes and white necktie and gone to a ball.’

Tolstóy’s elegance in dress was very noticeable at this time. We read of the grey beaver collar of his overcoat, of a fashionable cane he carried, and of the glossy hat he wore set on one side, as well as of his curly, dark-brown hair.

Gymnastics were fashionable in Moscow, and any one wishing to find Tolstóy between one and two in the afternoon could do so at the Gymnasium in the Great Dmítrovka Street, where dressed in gymnastic attire he might be seen intent on springing over the vaulting-horse without upsetting a cone placed on its back. Though muscularly very strong and active his health was often unsatisfactory and in particular he suffered frequently and severely from toothache.

Among the visitors Fet met at Tolstóy’s house we find the name of Saltykóv who, under the pseudonym of Schedrín, is known as one of Russia’s keenest satirists. Another guest was B. N. Chichérin, philosopher and jurist, and author of works on *Science and Religion, Property and the State*, and other subjects Tolstóy dealt with three or four decades later. Katkóv, editor of the *Moscow Vedomosti* and the monthly *Russian Messenger*, was another acquaintance. Some of Tolstóy’s chief works subsequently appeared in his magazine.

In January 1858 Countess Alexandra Tolstóy visited Moscow. References to her occur frequently in his Diary. He says of her: ‘In the evening to the Tolstóys. Alexandrine is delightful! A joy and a consolation. I have never met any woman who reached to her knees.’

Writing to her on 1st May 1858 he says:

At this very moment two nightingales are singing under my window. I am experimenting with them and, can you

believe it, have succeeded in calling them under my window by sestolets on the piano. I discovered it by chance. The other day, as I often do, I was strumming a sonata of Haydn in which sestolets occur. Suddenly in the garden and in Auntie's room (she has a canary) there was a whistling, piping and trilling, in answer to my sestolets. I stopped and they stopped. I recommenced and so did they—two nightingales and a canary. I spent about three hours at this occupation. The balcony was open, the night was warm, the frogs took their part and the watchman's rattle its part. It was excellent. Forgive me if this letter is rather wild. I confess I have gone a little off my head with the Spring and the solitude. I wish you the same with my whole heart. There are moments of happiness stronger, but none fuller and more harmonious than these.

When she returned to Petersburg Tolstóy accompanied her as far as the town of Klin, and took the opportunity to visit Princess Volkónski (a cousin of his mother) who had a small estate in those parts. He remained some weeks with this affectionate old lady, who was able to tell him much about his mother and her family. He greatly enjoyed his quiet stay with her, and at her house he wrote *Three Deaths*, which appeared the following January. It is an admirably written study of the death of a rich lady, a poor post-horse driver, and a tree.

On 26th January, in Moscow, he went to a *bal masqué* and notes: 'Two masks. One of them a Samára girl. 100 I took her, and it was horrid.'

In February he was back at Yásnaya Polyána, then he again visited Moscow, and in March spent a fortnight in Petersburg. His love of music was much in evidence at this period, and in conjunction with V. P. Bótkin, Perfélief, Mortier (his late rival) and others, he founded the Moscow Musical Society which ultimately resulted in the formation of the Moscow Conservatoire of which Nicholas Rubinstein became Director.

An intimate acquaintance of Tolstóy's at this time was S. T. Aksákov, already referred to, the author of a book translated into English as *A Russian Gentleman*, and other works.

The invigorating influence of spring shows itself in a letter Tolstóy wrote about this time to his aunt, Countess A. A. Tolstóy:

Grandma!—Spring!

For good people it is excellent to live in the world; and even for men such as me, it is sometimes good. In Nature, in the air, in everything, is hope, future—an attractive future. . . . Sometimes one deceives oneself and thinks that happiness and a future await not only Nature but oneself also, and then one feels happy. I am now in such a state and with characteristic egotism hasten to write to you of things that are of interest only to me. When I review things sanely I know very well that I am an old, frozen, little potato, and one already boiled with sauce; but spring so acts on me that I sometimes catch myself in the full blaze of imagining myself a plant which with others has only now blossomed, and which will peacefully, simply, and joyfully, grow in God's world. The result is that at this time of year such an internal clearing-up goes on in me, such a cleansing and ordering, as only those who have experienced this feeling can imagine. All the old—away! All worldly conventions, all idleness, all egotism, all vice, all confused indefinite attachments, all regrets, even repentances—away with you all! . . . Make room for the wonderful little flowers whose buds are swelling and growing in the spring! . . .

After much more he concludes:

Farewell, dear Grandma, do not be angry with me for this nonsense, but answer with a word of wisdom imbued with kindness, Christian kindness! I have long wished to say that for you it is pleasanter to write French, and I understand feminine thoughts better in French.

In April he was again at Yásnaya, where despite repeated visits to Moscow he spent most of the summer. There was as yet no railway from Moscow southward to Túla, and the serfs' belief concerning the new telegraph posts which stood by the side of the high road was that when the wire had been completed, 'Freedom' would be sent by it from Petersburg. Even Tatiána Alexándrovna Érgolski did not understand these new-fangled things, and when driving along the road one day asked Tolstóy to explain how letters were written

by telegraph. He told her as simply as he could how it was done, and received the reply: '*Oui, oui, je comprends, mon cher!*' How much she had really understood was shown however half an hour later when, after keeping her eye on the wire all the time, she inquired: 'But how is it, *mon cher Léon*, that during a whole half-hour I have not seen a single letter go along the telegraph?'

Fet and his wife used to stay a day or two at Yásnaya when journeying to and from Moscow, and Fet's account of Aunt Tatiána accords with Tolstóy's own affectionate recollections of that lady. Fet says that he and his wife 'made the acquaintance of Tolstóy's charming old aunt, Tatiána Alexándrovna Èrgolski, who received us with that old-world affability which puts a man at once at his ease on entering a new house. She did not devote herself to memories of times long past but lived fully in the present.

'Speaking of them all by their pet names, she mentioned that Serèzhenka Tolstóy had gone to his home at Pirogóvo, but Nikólenka would probably stay a bit longer in Moscow with Máshenka, but Lëvochká's friend Dyákov had recently visited them,' and so on.

Many years later Tolstóy jotted down his memories of the long autumn and winter evenings spent with Auntie Tatiána, to which he says he owed his best thoughts and impulses. He would sit in his arm-chair reading, thinking, and occasionally listening to her kindly and gentle conversation with two of the servants. Natályá Petróvna (an old woman who lived there not because she was of much use but because she had nowhere else to go) and a maid Dúnechka.

The chief charm of that life lay in the absence of any material care, in good relations with those nearest—relations no one could spoil—and in the leisureliness and the unconsciousness of flying time. . . .

When after living badly at a neighbour's in Túla with cards, gipsy girls, hunting, and stupid vanity, I used to return home and come to her, we would by old habit kiss each other's hand, I her dear energetic hand and she my dirty vicious hand, and

also by old habit we greeted one another in French, and I would joke with Natálya Petróvna and would sit down in the comfortable arm-chair. She well knew all I had been doing and regretted it, but never reproached me, retaining always the same gentleness and love. . . . I was once telling her how some one's wife had gone off with another man, and I said the husband ought to be glad to get rid of her. And suddenly my aunt lifted her eyebrows and said, as of a thing long decided in her mind, that that would be wrong of the husband because it would completely ruin the wife. After that she told me of a drama that had occurred among the serfs. Then she re-read a letter from my sister Máshenka, whom she loved if not more at least as much as she loved me, and spoke of Másha's husband (her own nephew) not to condemn him but with grief at the sorrow he inflicted on Máshenka. . . . The chief characteristic of her life, which involuntarily infected me, was her wonderful, general kindness to every one without exception. I try to recall a single instance of her being angry, or speaking a sharp word, or condemning any one, and I cannot recall one such instance in thirty years. She spoke well of our real aunt who had bitterly hurt her by taking us away from her. . . . As to her kindly treatment of the servants—that goes without saying. She had grown up in the idea that there are masters and servants, but she utilized her authority only to serve them. . . . She never blamed me directly for my evil life though she suffered on my account. My brother Sergéy, too, whom she also loved warmly, she did not reproach even when he took a gipsy girl to live with him. The only shade of disquietude she showed on our account was that when he was very late in returning home, she would say, 'What has become of our Sergéus?' Only *Sergéus* instead of *Serëzha*. . . . She never told us in words how to live, never preached to us. All her moral work was done internally; externally one only saw her deeds—and not even deeds: there were no deeds; but all her life, peaceful, sweet, submissive, and loving, not troubled or self-satisfied, but a life of quiet unobtrusive love. . . . Her affectionateness and tranquillity made her society noticeably attractive and gave a special charm to intimacy with her. I know of no case where she offended any one, and of no one who did not love her. She never spoke of herself, never of religion or of what we ought to believe, or of how she believed or prayed. She believed everything, except that she rejected one dogma—that of eternal torment. '*Dieu, qui est la bonté*

même, ne peut pas vouloir nos souffrances . . . [God, who is goodness itself, cannot desire our pains . . .] She often called me by my father's name (Nicholas) and this pleased me very much because it showed that her conceptions of me and of my father mingled in her love of us both.

It was not her love of me alone that was joyous. What was joyous was the atmosphere of love of all who were present or absent, alive or dead, and even of animals. . . .

After telling of her goodness and affection Tolstóy says in his Memoirs that, though he appreciated his happiness with her, he did not at the time nearly realize its full value, and he adds:

She was fond of keeping sweets: figs, gingerbreads, and dates, in various jars in her room. I cannot forget, nor remember without a cruel pang of remorse, that I repeatedly refused her money she wanted for such things, and how she, sighing sadly, remained silent. It is true I was in need of money, but I cannot now remember without horror that I refused her.

Again, in another place after mentioning her self-devotion, he says:

And it was to her, to her, that I refused the small pleasure of having figs and chocolate (not so much for herself as to treat me) and being able to give a trifle to those who begged of her. . . . Dear, dear, Auntie, forgive me! *Si jeunesse savait, si vieillesse pouvait* [if youth but knew, if age but could], I do not mean in the sense of the good lost for oneself in youth, but in the sense of the good not given and the evil done to those who are no more.

Of Leo's life at Yásnaya at this time his brother Nicholas gave Fet the following humorous account:

Lëvchka is zealously trying to become acquainted with peasant life and with farming, of both of which, like the rest of us, he has till now had but a superficial knowledge. But I am not sure what sort of acquaintance will result from his efforts: Lëvchka wants to get hold of everything at once without omitting anything—even his gymnastics. So he has rigged up a bar under his study window. And of course, apart from prejudice with which he wages such fierce war, he is right: gymnastics do not interfere with farming; but the steward sees

things differently and says, 'One comes to the master for orders, and he hangs head downward in a red jacket holding on by one knee to a perch and swings himself. His hair hangs down and blows about, the blood comes to his face, and one does not know whether to listen to his orders or to be astonished at him!'

Lëvochka is delighted with the way the serf Ufán sticks out his arms when ploughing, and so Ufán has become for him an emblem of village strength, like the legendary Mikúla, and he himself, sticking his elbows out wide, takes to the plough and 'úfanizes'.

At this period, preceding the Emancipation, relations between the owners and the serfs did not go very smoothly, of which we have indications in the Diary:

19th June 1858. I do not write, or read, or think. I am engrossed in farming. The struggle is at its hottest. The peasants try it on and are obstinate. Those at Grumont are sullen, but say nothing. I am afraid of myself. A vengeful feeling I never had before makes itself felt in me—to revenge myself on the Commune. I am afraid of being unjust.

27th November, '58. No, I have deteriorated to an impossible extent. Farming is a coarse occupation. To-day Razún lied, and I was furious and, following the wretched custom, said, 'have him flogged'. I waited for him to come. I sent to have him brought back, but they did not overtake him [before he was brought to the police to be flogged]. I shall ask his pardon. Never again will I sentence any one before two hours have elapsed. . . . I have asked pardon and given him three rubles, but it has tortured me.

9th October '59. I have twice hit a man this summer. . . .

The recollection of having hit men and had them flogged tormented Tolstóy in his old age, though he had done such things very exceptionally, and in days when it was regarded as a necessary procedure.

In May 1858 he wrote to Fet:

DEAREST LITTLE UNCLE [or as we might say, Dear old Boy]:

I write two words just to say that I embrace you with all my might, have received your letter, kiss the hand of Márya Petróvna [Fet's wife] and make obeisance to you all. Auntie thanks you very much for your message and greets you, so also does my sister. What a wonderful spring it has been and

is! I in solitude have tasted it admirably. Brother Nicholas must be at Nikólskoe. Catch him, and do not let him go. I want to come to see you this month. Turgénev has gone to Winzig till August to cure his bladder.

Devil take him. I am tired of loving him. He deserts us and won't cure his bladder.

Now good-bye, dear friend. If you have no poem ready for me by the time I come I shall proceed to squeeze one out of you.—Your

COUNT L. TOLSTÓY.

Another letter to Fet runs:

Ay, old fellow, ahoy! First you give no sign, though it is spring and you know we are all thinking of you, and that I, like Prometheus, am bound to a rock yet thirst for sight or sound of you. You should either come, or at least send us a proper invitation. Secondly, you have retained my brother, and a very good brother, surnamed 'Firdusi' [an allusion to Nicholas's Oriental wisdom]. The chief culprit in this matter, I suspect, is Márya Petróvna, to whom I humbly bow, requesting her to return us our own brother. Jestings apart, he [Nicholas] bids me let you know that he must be here next week. Druzhínin will also come, so mind you come too, old fellow.

On 24th October 1858 he writes to Fet:

To write stories is stupid and shameful. To write verses—well, write them; but to love a good man is very pleasant. Yet perhaps, against my will and intention, not I but an unripe story inside me compels me to love you. It sometimes seems like that. Do what one will amid the manure and the mangle one somehow begins to compose. Thank heaven I have not yet allowed myself to write and will not do so. . . . Thank you exceedingly for your trouble about a veterinary. I have found one in Túla and have begun the cure, but I do not know what will come of it.—And may the devil take them all—Druzhínin is appealing to me as a matter of friendship to write a story I really want to. I will spin such a yarn that there will be no head or tail to it. . . . But joking apart, how is your Hafiz getting on? [Fet was translating some poems of Hafiz] Turn it which way you will, the height of wisdom and fortitude for me is to enjoy the poetry of others and not to let my own loose among men in ugly garb but to consume it myself with my daily bread. But at times one suddenly wishes to be a

great man and it is so annoying that this has not yet come about! One even hurries to get up quicker, or to finish dinner, in order to begin. . . . Send me a poem, the healthiest of those you have translated from Hafiz, *pour me faire venir l'eau à la bouche* [to make my mouth water], and I will send you a sample of wheat. Hunting has bored me to death. The weather is excellent, but I do not hunt alone.

In company Tolstóy was however a keen sportsman, and in December 1858 he nearly lost his life while out bear-shooting. He has told the story, with some embellishments, in one of the tales for children in the volume *Twenty-three Tales* (in this series, and in the 'World's Classics'). The facts were these:

Tolstóy and his brother Nicholas had made the acquaintance of a Mr. Grómeka, who shared their fondness for hunting—a sport very different in Russia from what it is in England, as readers of Tolstóy's descriptions are aware.

Grómeka having heard that a she-bear with two young had her lair in the forest near the railway at Volochók, half-way between Petersburg and Moscow, arranged with the peasants of that locality and invited the Tolstóys and others to a hunt. The invitation was accepted, and on 21st December Leo Tolstóy shot a bear. On the 22nd the members of the party, each armed with two guns, were placed at the ends of cuttings running through the forest in which the big she-bear had been surrounded. These paths or cuttings divided the wood like the lines of a chess-board. Peasants employed as beaters were stationed to prevent the animal escaping except by approaching one or other of the sportsmen. Ostáshkov, a famous professional huntsman, supervised the proceedings. The guests were advised to stamp down the snow around them to give themselves room to move freely; but Tolstóy (with his usual objection to routine methods) argued that, as they were out to shoot the bear and not to box with her, it was useless to tread down the snow. He therefore stood with his double-barrel gun in his hand surrounded by snow almost up to his waist.

The bear, roused by Ostáshkov's shouts, rushed down a cutting directly towards one of the other sportsmen, but perceiving him, suddenly swerved from her course and took a path which brought her out on to the cutting leading straight to Tolstóy. He, not expecting her visit, did not fire till the beast was within six yards, and his first shot missed. The bear was but two yards from him when his second shot hit her in the mouth. It failed to stop her rush and she knocked him over on his back in the snow. Carried past by her own impetus at first, the bear soon returned, and the next thing Tolstóy knew was that he was being weighed down by something heavy and warm, and felt his face drawn into the beast's mouth. He could only offer a passive resistance by drawing his head as much as possible between his shoulders and trying to present his cap instead of his face to the bear's teeth. This state of things lasted only a few seconds, yet long enough for the bear, after one or two misses, to get her teeth into the flesh above and below his left eye. At that moment Ostáshkov armed with a small switch came running up, shouting: 'Where are you getting to? Where are you getting to?' at which the beast promptly took fright and rushed off. Next day she was followed up and killed. Owing to the amount of blood lost and flesh torn, Tolstóy's wound at first appeared serious, but when it had been washed with snow and he had been taken to the nearest town and had had it sewn up, it proved to be superficial. He always retained a scar however as a memento of the encounter, and the bear's skin may still be seen at Yásnaya.

Family Happiness, referred to in the preceding chapter, was partly written in 1858 and was published early in 1859.

Tolstóy spent the first months of 1859 in Moscow, and on the occasion of joining the Moscow Society of Lovers of Russian Literature, on 4th February, he for the first time made a speech in public, a task for which he once told me that he had no aptitude at all and which he much disliked. He wrote it out and it was to have

appeared in the *Proceedings* of the Society, but did not get printed during his lifetime. Its subject was 'The Supremacy of the Artistic Element in Literature', and in it he maintained a position quite different from that he advocated forty years later in *What is Art?*

He was answered by the Slavophil A. S. Homyakóv, who presided at the meeting and in the course of his reply said:

Allow me to remark that the justice of the opinion you have so skilfully stated is far from destroying the legitimacy of the present temporary and exceptional side of literature. That which is always right, that which is always beautiful, that which is as unalterable as the most fundamental laws of the soul, undoubtedly holds and should hold the first place in the thoughts, the impulses, and therefore in the speech, of man. It and it alone will be handed on by generation to generation and by nation to nation as a precious inheritance. But on the other hand, in the nature of man and of society there is continual need of self-indictment. There are moments, moments important in history, when such self-indictment acquires a special and indefeasible right, and manifests itself in literature very definitely and keenly. . . .

Of course Art is perfectly free, it finds its justification and aim in itself. But the freedom of Art in the abstract has nothing to do with the inner life of the artist. An artist is not a theory—a sphere of thought and mental activity, but a man and always a man of his own times, often its best representative, completely imbued with its spirit and its defined or nascent aspirations. By the very impressionability of his nature without which he could not be an artist, he even more than others receives all the painful as well as joyous sensations of the society to which he is born. . . .

So the writer, the servant of pure art, sometimes even unconsciously and despite of his own will, becomes an accuser. I will let myself cite you, Count, as an example. You consciously follow a definite road faithfully and undeviatingly, but are you really quite alien to the literature of indictment? If only in the picture of a consumptive post-boy dying on a stove amid comrades apparently indifferent to his sufferings [*Three Deaths*], have you not indicated some social disease, some evil? When describing that death, is it possible that you did not suffer from the callous indifference of good

but unawakened human souls? Yes, you too have been, and will be, an involuntary accuser!

This question of the true position of literary art and its relation to the rest of life was one which occupied Tolstóy for many years and on which before the century closed he expressed himself in a work which all who would deal with the subject must reckon with.

In April he went to Petersburg and spent ten days very pleasantly with Countess A. A. Tolstóy. By the end of the month he was back at Yásnaya. In July, Turgénev, from France, wrote Fet a long letter in blank verse, a few lines of which indicate the relation between Tolstóy and himself at this time:

Kiss Nicholas Tolstóy on my behalf
And to his brother Leo make my bow,
As to his sister also.
In his postscriptum rightly he asserts:
‘There is no cause’ for me to write to him,
Indeed I know he bears me little love
And I love him as little. Too differently
Are mixed those elements of which we’re formed.

During this winter Tolstóy devoted much time to an attempt to organize schools on and near his
1859 estate. The education of the peasant children
-60 was one of the things Russia most needed and most neglected. Tolstóy recognized this and set himself strenuously to show how the need could be met. The work he now did was however only preliminary to that he undertook after his second visit to Western Europe. He was himself far from being at peace mentally, and at the commencement of the New Year noted in his Diary:

The burden of the estate, the burden of bachelor life, and all sorts of doubts and pessimistic feelings agitate my mind.

Writing to Fet on 23rd February 1860, he says:

I have read Turgénev’s *On the Eve*. This is my opinion: to write novels is undesirable, especially for people who are

depressed and do not well know what they want from life. *On the Eve* however is much better than *A Nest of Gentlefolk*, and there are in it excellent negative characters: the artist and the father. The rest are not types; even their conception, their position, is not typical, or they are quite insignificant. That however is always Turgénev's mistake. The girl is hopelessly bad: 'Ah, how I love thee . . . her eyelashes were long.' In general it always surprises me that Turgénev with his mental powers and poetic sensibility should even in his methods not be able to refrain from banality. This banality shows itself most of all in his negative methods, which recall Gógol. There is no humanity or sympathy for the characters, but the author exhibits monsters whom he scolds and does not pity. This jars painfully with the tone and intention of Liberalism in everything else. It was all very well in the days of Tsar Gorókh [a character in a fairy story] or of Gógol (though if one does not pity even the most insignificant of one's characters one should scold them so that the heavens grow hot, or laugh at them so that one's sides split, and not as our splenetic and dyspeptic Turgénev does). On the whole however there is now no one else who could write such a novel, though it will not meet with success.

Ostróvski's *The Storm* is, in my opinion, a wretched work, but will be successful. Not Ostróvski and Turgénev are to blame, but the times. . . . Something else is now needed: not that we should learn and criticize, but that we should teach Jack and Jill at least a little of what we know.

This letter to Fet, who was in Moscow, ends with requests to procure some books, including a veterinary handbook, a veterinary instrument, and a lancet for use on human beings, to see about procuring six ploughs of a special make, and to ascertain the price of clover and timothy-grass, of which Tolstóy had some to sell.

At this time he was working on *The Cossacks*, the plan of which he had sketched out in 1852, but of which he did not complete the published portion till 1862.

One comes in his Diary across notes which indicate his state of mind at this time about religion. After reading a book on Materialism he notes:

I instinctively thought of prayer. To whom? What is God, imagined so clearly that one can petition Him, communicate

with Him? If I even imagine Him to myself as such, He loses for me all grandeur. A God who can be petitioned and who can be served, is an expression of mental weakness. He is God just because His whole nature is such as I cannot imagine to myself. Yes, He is not a Being, but a Law and a Force.

He was a great puzzle to his friends and acquaintances—always ready to take his own line strenuously yet sometimes far from sure what that line was. Turgénev wrote to Fet:

Leo Tolstóy continues his eccentricities. Evidently it was so decreed at his birth. When will he turn his last somersault and stand on his feet?

The fact that Tolstóy, like his friend Fet, was neglecting literature, did not fail to call forth many remonstrances: one of the most urgent of these came from Druzhínin, who wrote:

Every writer has his moments of doubt and self-dissatisfaction and however strong and legitimate this feeling may be, no one on that account has yet ceased his connexion with literature; every one goes on writing to the end. But all tendencies good or bad cling to you with peculiar obstinacy; so that you more than others need to think of this and to consider the whole matter amicably. . . .

On all of us lies a responsibility rooted in the immense importance of literature to Russian society. An Englishman or an American may laugh at the fact that in Russia not merely men of thirty, but grey-haired proprietors of 2,000 serfs, sweat over stories of a hundred pages which appear in the magazines, are devoured by everybody, and arouse discussions in society for a whole day. However much artistic quality may have to do with this result, you cannot explain it merely by Art. What in other lands is a matter of idle talk and careless dilettantism with us is quite another affair. Among us things have taken such shape that a story—the most frivolous and insignificant form of literature—becomes one of two things, either it is rubbish, or else it is the voice of a leader sounding throughout the Empire. By some strange instinct the Russian public has chosen from among the crowd of writers four or five bellmen whom it values as leaders, refusing to listen to any qualifications or deductions. You—partly by talent, partly by the practical qualities of your soul,

and partly owing simply to a concurrence of fortunate circumstances—have stepped into this favourable relation with the public. On that account you must not go away and hide, but must work even to the exhaustion of your strength and powers. If you tear yourself off from the circle of writers and become inactive you will be dull and will deprive yourself of an important rôle in society. . . .

At this time the state of health of his brother Nicholas—who (like Dmítri) had consumptive tendencies—began to disturb Leo Tolstóy. It was arranged that Nicholas should go to Germany for a cure. The following letter written by Tolstóy to Fet after Nicholas had started, refers to this and other matters:

I am greatly at sixes and sevens with myself. Farming, on the scale on which it is carried out on my estate, crushes me. To 'úfanize' [work like a peasant; the origin of this word has already been explained] is a thing I only see afar off. Family affairs, Nicholas's illness (of which we have as yet no news from abroad) and my sister's departure (she leaves me in three days' time) also occupy and crush me. Bachelor life, i.e. not having a wife, and the thought that it is getting too late, torments me from a third side. In general everything is now out of tune with me. On account of my sister's helplessness and my wish to see Nicholas, I shall at any rate procure a foreign passport to-morrow, and perhaps I shall accompany my sister abroad, especially if we do not receive news, or receive bad news, from Nicholas.

On 26th May 1860 he notes in his Diary:

Got up at five, directed the work myself, all went well and I am cheerful. . . . Towards evening I was becoming angry at the manuring. I got down and started working till I was in a heavy sweat, and everything seemed good and I felt fond of everybody. It would be strange if this adoration of mine for work went for nothing.

Things were not going well with Nicholas, who wrote from Soden in Hesse-Nassau:

In Soden we joined Turgénev who is alive and well—so well that he himself confesses that he is 'quite' well. He has found some German girl and goes into ecstasies about her. We (this

relates to our dearest Turgénev) play chess together, but somehow it does not go as it should: he is thinking of his German girl and I of my cure. . . . I shall probably stay in Soden for at least six weeks. I do not describe my journey because I was ill all the time.

Eventually Leo Tolstóy made up his mind to accompany his sister and her children abroad, and on 3rd July 1860 (old style) they took steamer from Petersburg for Stettin *en route* for Berlin. Besides anxiety on his brother's account Tolstóy had another reason for going abroad: he wished to study the European systems of education in order to see what had been accomplished in the line to which he now intended to devote himself.

On reaching Berlin he suffered from toothache for four days and decided to remain there while his sister proceeded to join Nicholas at Soden. He consulted a doctor, as he was suffering also from headache and hæmorrhoidal attacks, and he was ordered to undergo a cure at Kissingen.

He stayed only a few days in Berlin after getting rid of his toothache, and left on 14th July (old style) having found time to attend some lectures, and having visited some evening classes for artisans at the *Handwerkersverein* where he was much interested in the system of 'question-boxes'. This method of arousing the interest of audiences by allowing them to put questions to the lecturer was new to him, and he was struck by the life it brought into the classes, and the freedom of mental contact between scholars and teacher. He noticed the same thing when in London a few months later, for he told me that nothing he saw there interested him more than a lecture he attended in South Kensington, at which questions were put by working men and answered by a speaker who was master of his subject and knew how to popularize it.

In Berlin he visited the Moabit Prison in which solitary confinement was practised, and he strongly disapproved of this mechanical attempt to secure moral reform. From Berlin he went to Leipzig and spent a day inspecting schools; but he derived little satisfaction from

them, as is indicated by a remark in his Diary, 'Have been in school—terrible. Prayers for the King, blows, everything by rote, frightened, paralysed children. . . .' He then proceeded to Dresden, where he called on the novelist Auerbach, whose story, *Ein Neues Leben*, had greatly influenced him. The chief character in that story is a Count Fulkenberg, who after being an officer in the army gets into trouble, escapes from prison, buys the passport of a schoolmaster, Eugene Baumann, and under that name devotes himself to the task of educating peasant children. When Auerbach entered the room where Tolstóy was waiting, the latter introduced himself with the words: 'I am Eugene Baumann,' in such solemn tones and with so morose an appearance that Auerbach was taken aback, and feared that he was about to be threatened with an action for libel. Tolstóy however hastened to add: '—not in name, but in character—' and went on to explain how good an effect Auerbach's *Schwarzwälder Dorfgeschichten* had had on him.

After three days in Dresden he went on to Kissingen, which in those times was about five hours' journey from Soden, where Nicholas was staying. Still intent on his educational inquiries, Tolstóy *en route* read a history of pedagogics.

From Kissingen he wrote to his Aunt Tatiána that he thought the cure was doing him good, and added:

Tell the steward to write me most minutely about the farming, the harvest, the horses, and their illness. Tell the schoolmaster to write about the school: how many pupils come and whether they learn well. I shall certainly return in autumn and intend to occupy myself more than ever with the school, so I do not wish its reputation to be lost while I am away, and I want as many pupils as possible from different parts.

While in Kissingen he read Bacon and Luther, and made the acquaintance of Julius Froebel, author of *The System of Social Politics* and nephew of the founder of the Kindergarten system. Julius Froebel was himself interested in educational matters and was a most suitable person to explain his uncle's ideas.

Tolstóy astonished his new acquaintance, with whom he used to go for walks, by the uncompromising rigidity of his views, which contrary to his attitude when in contact with the Slavophiles showed a considerable tinge of Slavophilism. Progress in Russia, declared Tolstóy, must be based on popular education, which would give better results in Russia than in Germany because the Russian people were still unperverted, whereas the Germans were like children who had for years been subjected to a bad education. Popular education should not be compulsory. If it is a blessing the demand for it should come naturally, as the demand for food comes from hunger.

Tolstóy visited the country round Kissingen, and travelling northward through a part of Germany rich in scenery and in historic interest, reached Eisenach and visited the Wartburg where Luther was confined after the Diet of Worms. The personality of the great Protestant reformer interested him much, and after seeing the room in which Luther commenced his translation of the Bible, he noted in his Diary: 'Luther was great!' Twenty years later Tolstóy himself when trying to free men's minds from the yoke of an established Church, shaped his chief weapon against the Church by translating not, it is true, like Luther, the whole Bible, but the Gospels.

Meanwhile, Nicholas Tolstóy's health had grown worse rather than better. Sergéy having been unlucky at roulette decided to return to Russia, and visiting Leo at Kissingen *en route*, told him of his fears for Nicholas. Leo then spent a fortnight in the Harz Mountains, enjoying nature and reading a great deal. On 26th August he joined Nicholas and his sister and her children at Soden. The doctors had decided that Nicholas must winter in a warmer climate, and the place selected was Hyères near Toulon, on the shores of the Mediterranean.

The first stage of the journey undertaken by the family party was to Frankfort-on-Main, where Countess

A. A. Tolstóy was staying. She tells the following story of Leo's visit to her on this occasion:

One day Prince Alexander of Hesse and his wife were calling on me, when suddenly the door of the drawing-room opened and Leo appeared in the strangest garb, suggestive of a picture of a Spanish bandit. I gasped with astonishment. Leo apparently was not pleased with my visitors and soon took his departure.

'Who is that singular person?' inquired my visitors in astonishment.

'Why, it is Leo Tolstóy!'

'Ah, good heavens! Why did you not tell us who it was? After reading his admirable writings we were dying to see him.'

And reproaches were showered upon me, intermingled with ecstatic praise of his talent.

Next time I saw him I told him all the flattering things that had been said about him, but his whole concern was directed to the fact that I had probably felt ashamed about him on that occasion.

'Perhaps it was so,' I unhesitatingly admitted. 'Your savage costume and grim appearance might have amazed any one.'

'The Chimney, it is all the Chimney!' growled he in a slightly offended tone.

So his freak resulted in my getting it from both sides.

From Frankfort the party proceeded to Hyères, where Nicholas, growing rapidly worse and worse, died on 20th September 1860.

Few men have been so admired and loved as he was by all who knew him. The only thing recorded against him is that when serving in the Caucasus he, like many of his fellow-officers, was intemperate, but after returning home he recovered his self-control. I have already told of his influence on Leo in the early days of the Ant-Brotherhood, and of the green stick buried where Tolstóy's own body was eventually to lie. Such influence Nicholas retained through life, and men and women of most different temperaments make enthusiastic mention of his charm and goodness. That Leo's judgment of life remained strongly influenced by his love for and

memory of Nicholas is plain to all who read his works attentively.

Turgénev once said:

The humility Leo Tolstóy developed theoretically, his brother actually practised in life. He always lived in the most impossible lodgings, almost hovels, somewhere in the out-of-the-way quarters of Moscow, and shared all he had with the poorest outcast. He was a delightful companion and narrator, but writing was to him almost a physical impossibility, the actual process of writing being as difficult for him as for a labourer whose stiff hands will not hold a pen.

Nicholas did however, as a matter of fact, contribute some very well composed *Memoirs of a Sportsman* to the *Contemporary*.

Never was any one's death more sincerely regretted. This is the letter Leo wrote to Aunt Tatiána the night of the event:

CHÈRE TANTE!—The black seal will have told you all. What for two weeks I have been expecting from hour to hour occurred at nine o'clock this evening. Only since yesterday did he let me help him undress, and to-day for the first time he definitely took to his bed and asked for a nurse. He was conscious all the time and a quarter-of-an-hour before he died he drank some milk and told me he was comfortable. Even to-day he still joked and showed interest in my educational projects. Only a few minutes before he died he whispered several times: 'My God, my God!' It seems to me that he felt his position, but deceived himself and us. Máshenka only to-day, some four hours before, had gone three miles out of Hyères to where she is living. She did not at all expect it to come so soon. I have just closed his eyes. I shall now soon be back with you and tell you all personally. I do not intend to transport the body. The funeral will be arranged by the Princess Golítsin, who has taken it all on herself.

Farewell, chère tante. I cannot console you. It is God's will—that is all. I am not writing to Serëzha now. He is probably away hunting, you know where. So let him know or send him this letter.

On the day after the funeral he wrote to Sergéy:

I think you have had news of the death of Nicholas. I am

sorry for you that you were not here. Hard as it is, I am glad it all took place in my presence and that it acted on me in the right way—not like Mítenka's [his third brother, Dmítri] death of which I heard when I was not thinking at all about him. This however is quite different. With Mítenka only memories of childhood and family feeling were bound up, but this was a real man both to you and to me, whom we loved and *respected* positively more than any one else on earth. You know the selfish feeling which came latterly, that the sooner it was over the better; it is dreadful now to write it and to remember that one thought it. Till the last day, with his extraordinary strength of character and power of concentration, he did everything to avoid becoming a burden to me. On the day of his death he dressed and washed himself, and in the morning I found him dressed on his bed. Only about nine hours before he died did he give way to his illness and ask to be undressed. It first happened in the closet. I went downstairs and heard his door open. I returned and did not find him. At first I feared to go to him—he used not to like it, but this time he himself said, 'Help me!'

And he submitted and became different that day, mild and gentle. He did not groan, did not blame any one, praised everybody, and said to me: 'Thank you, *my friend*.' You understand what that meant between us. I told him I had heard how he coughed in the morning, but had not come to him from *fausse honte* [false shame]. 'Needlessly,' said he—'it would have consoled me.' Suffering? He suffered, but it was not until a couple of days before his death that he once said: 'How terrible these nights without sleep are! Towards morning the cough chokes one unendingly! And it hurts—God knows how! A couple more such nights—it's terrible!' Not once did he say plainly that he felt the approach of death. But he only did not *say* it. On the day of his death he ordered a dressing-gown and yet when I remarked that if he did not get better Máshenka and I would not go to Switzerland, he replied: 'Do you really think I shall be better?' in such a tone that it was evident what he felt but for my sake did not say, and what I for his sake did not show; all the same I knew from the morning what was coming, and was with him all the time. He died quite without suffering—externally at all events. He breathed more and more slowly—and it was all over. The next day I went to him and feared to uncover his face. I thought it would show yet more suffering and be more terrible than during his illness, but you cannot imagine

what a beautiful face it was, with his best, merry, calm expression.

Yesterday he was buried here. At one time I thought of transporting him and of telegraphing for you; but I reconsidered it. It is no use chafing the wound. I am sorry for you that the news will have reached you when out hunting, amid distractions, and will not grip you as it does us. It is good for one. I now feel what I have often been told, that when one loses some one who was what he was to us, it becomes much easier to think of one's own death.

On 13th October 1860 he notes in his Diary:

It is nearly a month since Nicholas died. That event has torn me terribly from life. Again the question: Why? Already the departure draws near. Whither? Nowhere! I try to write, I force myself but do not get on because I cannot attach enough importance to the work to supply the necessary strength and patience. At the very time of the funeral the thought occurred to me of writing a materialist Gospel, a Life of Christ as a materialist.

One sees how one after another the seeds of the work Tolstóy was to do in later years planted themselves in his mind. In early childhood came the enthusiasm for the Ant-Brotherhood, and the influence of his brother, of Aunt Tatiána, and of the pilgrims; then an acquaintance with the writings of Voltaire and other sceptics, undermining belief in the miraculous; then, at Sevastopol, the idea of 'founding a new religion: Christianity purged of dogmas and mysticism'; then a study of Luther's Reformation, and now the idea of a rationalist Life of Christ.

On 17th October he writes to Fet:

I think you already know what has happened. On 20th September he died, literally in my arms. Nothing in my life has so impressed me. It is true, as he said, that nothing is worse than death. And when one reflects well that *that* is the end of all, then there is nothing worse than life. Why strive or try, since of what was Nicholas Tolstóy nothing remains his? He did not say that he felt the approach of death, but I know he watched each step of its approach and knew with certainty how much remained. Some moments before his death he

drowsed off, but awoke suddenly and whispered with horror: 'What is that?' That was when he saw it—the absorption of himself into Nothingness. And if he found nothing to cling to, what can I find? Still less! And assuredly neither I nor any one will fight it to the last moment as he did. Two days before, I said to him: 'We ought to put a commode in your room.'

'No,' said he, 'I am weak, but not yet as weak as that; I will struggle on yet awhile.'

To the last he did not yield but did everything for himself, and always tried to be occupied. He wrote, questioned me about my writings, and advised me. But it seemed to me that he did all this not from any inner impulse but on principle. One thing—his love of Nature—remained to the last. The day before, he went into his bedroom and from weakness fell on his bed by the open window. I came to him, and he said with tears in his eyes, 'How I have enjoyed this whole hour'.

From earth we come and to earth we go. One thing is left—a dim hope that there, in Nature, of which we become part in the earth, something will remain and will be found.

All who knew and saw his last moments say: 'How wonderfully calmly, peacefully, he died'; but I know with what terrible pain, for not one feeling of his escaped me.

A thousand times I say to myself: 'Let the dead bury their dead.' One must make some use of the strength which remains to one, but one cannot persuade a stone to fall upwards instead of downwards whither it is drawn. One cannot laugh at a joke one is weary of. One cannot eat when one does not want to. And what is life all for, when to-morrow the torments of death will begin, with all the abomination of falsehood and self-deception, and will end in annihilation for oneself? An amusing thing! Be useful, be beneficent, be happy while life lasts—say people to one another; but you, and happiness, and virtue, and utility, consist of truth. And the truth I have learned in thirty-two years is that the position in which we are placed is terrible. 'Take life as it is; you have put yourself in that position.' How? I take life as it is. As soon as man reaches the highest degree of development, he sees clearly that it is all nonsense and deception, and that the truth—which he still loves better than all else—is terrible. That when you look at it well and clearly you wake with a start and say with terror, as my brother did: 'What is that?'

Of course so long as the desire to know and speak the truth lasts, one tries to know and speak. That alone remains to me

of the moral world; higher than that I cannot place myself. That alone I will do, but not in the form of your art. Art is a lie and I can no longer love a beautiful lie.

I shall remain here for the winter because I am here and it is all the same where one lives. Please write to me. I love you as my brother loved you, and he remembered you to his last moment.

A month later we find him writing in a different state of mind:

A boy of thirteen has died in torment from consumption. What for? The only explanation is given by faith in the compensation of a future life. If that does not exist there is no justice, and justice is vain and the demand for justice—a superstition.

The next day he writes:

Justice forms the most essential demand of man from man. And man looks for the same in his relation to the universe. Without a future life it is lacking. Adaptability to its purpose is the sole, the unalterable, law of Nature say the naturalists. But in the best manifestations of man's soul: love and poetry—it is absent. This has all existed and has died, often without expressing itself. Nature far o'erstepped her aim when she gave man a need of poetry and love, if adaptability to purpose be her sole law.

Nearly twenty years later, in his *Confession*, Tolstóy referred to his brother's death in the words:

Another event which showed me that the superstitious belief in progress is insufficient as a guide to life, was my brother's death. Wise, good, serious, he fell ill while still a young man, suffered for more than a year, and died painfully, not understanding why he had lived and still less why he had to die. No theories could give me, or him, any reply to these questions during his slow and painful dying.

Any one who has read the works Tolstóy wrote during the quarter of a century that succeeded his brother's death knows how long he remained in doubt on this question of a future life, and how he expressed now one and now another view.

At Hyères he continued to study the problems of education, and for that purpose made many visits to

Marseilles. He also wrote; continuing *The Cossacks* and beginning an article on Popular Education. We get a glimpse of him at this period from his sister, who tells us that they had been invited to an At Home at Prince Dundukóv-Korsákov's, but Tolstóy, who was to have been the lion of the occasion, failed to put in an appearance. The company, which included all the 'best' people, were getting dull despite the hostess's efforts for their amusement, when at last, very late, Count Tolstóy was announced. The hostess and her guests immediately brightened up, but what was their astonishment to see him appear in tourist garb and wearing wooden *sabots*! He had been for a long walk, and returning late had come to the party without going to his lodgings; and no sooner was he in the room than he began assuring everybody that wooden *sabots* were the very best and most comfortable of foot-gear, and advising every one to adopt them. Even in those days he was a man to whom all things were permitted, and the evening instead of being spoilt became all the gayer from his eccentricity. There was a great deal of singing, and it fell to his lot to play the accompaniments.

At Hyères after his brother's death Tolstóy lived with his sister and her three children in a *pension* where the only other lodgers were a Madame Pláksin and her delicate nine-year-old son Sergéy, whose lungs were thought to be affected but who lived to become a poet and to publish his recollections of Tolstóy. Pláksin describes him as having been at that time a strongly-built, broad-shouldered man, with a good-natured smile on his face which was fringed by a thick, dark-brown beard. Under a large forehead still bearing a deep scar from the wound inflicted by the bear two years before, wise, kind eyes shone out of very deep sockets. 'Tolstóy', says Pláksin, 'was the soul of our little society and I never saw him dull; on the contrary he liked to amuse us with his stories, which were sometimes extremely fantastic.' Tolstóy rose early, and while he was at work the children were not allowed to disturb him

beyond running in for a moment to say 'good-morning'. Being himself an indefatigable walker he used to plan out excursions for the company, constantly discovering new places to visit: the salterns on the peninsula of Porquerolle, the holy hill where the chapel with the wonder-working image of the Madonna stands, or the ruins of the castle called *Trou des Fées*. On these excursions they used to have with them a small ass carrying provisions, fruit, and wine.

Tolstóy used to tell us various tales on the way. I remember one about a golden horse and a giant tree from the top of which all seas and all towns were visible. Knowing that my lungs were delicate, he often took me on his shoulder and continued his tale as he walked along. Need I say that we would have laid down our lives for him?

At dinner-time Tolstóy used to tell the French proprietors of the *pension* the strangest stories about Russia, which they never knew whether or not to believe till the Countess, or Madame Pláksina, came to their rescue by separating the truth from the fiction.

After dinner, either on the terrace or indoors, a performance commenced, opera or ballet, to the sound of the piano: the children 'mercilessly tormenting the ears of the audience' (which consisted of the two ladies, Tolstóy, and the Pláksins' nurse). Next came gymnastic exercises in which Tolstóy acted as professor. 'He would lie at full length on the floor making us do the same, and we had then to get up without using our hands.' He also contrived an apparatus out of rope, which he fixed up in the doorway; and on this he performed somersaults to the great delight of his juvenile audience.

When the latter became too turbulent and the ladies begged Tolstóy to subdue the noise, he would set the children round the table and tell them to bring pens and ink.

The following is an example of the sort of occupation he provided.

'Listen,' said he one day; 'I am going to give you a lesson.'
'What on?' demanded bright-eyed Lisa.

Disregarding his niece's question, he continued:

'Write. . . .'

'But what are we to write, uncle?' persisted Lisa.

'Listen; I will give you a theme. . . .!'

'What will you give us?'

'A theme!' firmly replied Tolstóy. 'In what respect does Russia differ from other countries? Write it here in my presence and don't copy from one another! Do you hear?' added he impressively.

In half an hour the 'compositions' were ready. Pláksin had to read his own as his lines were so irregular that no one else could decipher them. In his opinion Russia differed from other countries in that, at carnival time, Russians eat pancakes and slide down ice-hills and at Easter they colour eggs.

'Bravo!' said Tolstóy, and proceeded to make out Kólya's MS., in which Russia was distinguished by its snow, and Lisa's, in which 'troikas' (three-horse conveyances) played the chief part.

In reward for these evening exercises Tolstóy brought water-colour paints from Marseilles and taught the children drawing.

He often spent nearly the whole day with the children, teaching them, taking part in their games, and intervening in their disputes, which he analysed, proving to them who was in the right and who in the wrong.

There was at this time some mutual attraction between him and a young Russian lady, Miss Yákovleva, who was staying at Hyères, but like many other similar affairs it came to nothing.

On leaving Hyères, Tolstóy, his sister, and her children went to Geneva, and from thence he proceeded alone to Nice, Leghorn, Florence, Rome, and Naples. In Italy he says he experienced his first lively impression of antiquity, but little record remains of this journey and it is nowhere reflected in his writings.

He returned to Paris *via* Marseilles, the schools and other institutions of which he closely observed, trying to discover how man's intelligence is really best developed.

He was very unfavourably impressed by the popular schools there. The studies, he says, consisted in learning by heart the Catechism, sacred and general History, the four rules of Arithmetic, French spelling, and Book-keeping—the latter without sufficient comprehension of the use of arithmetic to enable the children to deal sensibly with the simplest practical problems requiring addition and subtraction, though they could do long multiplication sums quickly and well when only abstract figures were given. Similarly they answered questions in French History well by rote, but when questions were asked out of their regular order they would give such answers as that Henry IV was killed by Julius Caesar.

He observed the instruction given by the Churches, and visited the adult schools of the town as well as its *Salles d'Asile*, in which, he says:

I saw four-year-old children perform, like soldiers, evolutions round benches to orders given by whistle, and raise and cross their arms to the word of command and sing hymns of praise to God and their benefactors with strange trembling voices, and I became convinced that the educational establishments of Marseilles were extremely bad.

Any one seeing them would naturally conclude that the French people must be ignorant, coarse, hypocritical, full of superstition, and almost savage.

Yet one need only come in contact with, and chat with, any of the common people to convince oneself that on the contrary the French people are almost what they consider themselves to be: intelligent, clever, sociable, freethinking, and really civilized. Take a workman of say thirty years of age: he will write a letter without mistakes such as he made at school, sometimes even quite correctly; he has some idea of politics and therefore of recent history and geography; he knows some history from novels, knows something of natural history, and he very often draws and is able to apply mathematical formulæ to his trade. Where did he get all this?

In Marseilles I recently discovered the answer by wandering about the streets, drink-shops, *cafés chantants*, museums, workshops, wharves, and bookstalls. The very boy who told me that Henry IV was killed by Julius Caesar, knew the history of *The Three Musketeers* and of *Monte Cristo* very well.

In Marseilles Tolstóy found that everybody had read Dumas's works, of which there were twenty-eight cheap editions. He estimates that every week in the *cafés chantants* at least one-fifth of the population received oral education as the Greeks and Romans used to do. Comedies and sketches were performed, verses declaimed, and for good or evil the influence of this unconscious education far outweighed that of the compulsory education given in the schools.

1861 In January he reached Paris, where he spent a large part of his time in omnibuses, amusing himself by observing the people. He declares he never met a passenger who was not represented in one or other of Paul de Kock's stories. Of that writer, as of Dumas *père*, he thought highly. 'Don't talk nonsense to me', he once said, 'about Paul de Kock's immorality. He is according to English ideas somewhat improper. He is more or less what the French call *leste* and *gaulois*, but never immoral. In everything he says, and despite his rather free jests, his tendency is quite moral. He is a French Dickens. . . . As to Dumas, every novelist should know him by heart. His plots are admirable not to mention the workmanship. I can read and re-read him, though he aims chiefly at plots and intrigue.'

In Paris he again met Turgénev, and from France he went on to London, where he remained six weeks, not enjoying his visit much as he suffered severely from toothache nearly all the time. It is characteristic of Tolstóy that, though he was often a victim to toothache and was also much tried by bad digestion, he very seldom appears to have had his teeth attended to by a dentist. A dentist's establishment seemed to him so unnatural and artificial that it must be wrong. Moreover, dentists do not always do their work well, and toothache—if one endures it long enough—cures itself, and in the past the majority of mankind has got along without dentists. So he was inclined to put up with toothache as one of the ills it is best to bear patiently.

During his stay he and Turgénev, who had also come

to London, saw a great deal of Alexander Herzen, who was then editing *Kólokol* (*The Bell*)—the most influential paper ever published by a Russian exile.

One of Herzen's closest friends and co-workers during his long exile from Russia, was the poet N. P. Ogarëv, who had been his fellow-student at the Moscow University. Ogarëv, besides being a man of ability possessed an amiable character that much endeared him to his friends; but in an essay entitled *The First Step* written in 1892, we get a glimpse of what alienated Tolstóy's sympathy from the progressive movement these men represented. He there says:

I have just been reading the letters of one of our highly educated and advanced men of the 'forties, the exile Ogarëv, to another yet more highly educated and gifted man, Herzen. In these letters Ogarëv gives expression to his sincere thoughts and highest aspirations and one cannot fail to see that—as was natural in a young man—he rather shows off before his friend. He talks of self-perfecting, of sacred friendship, love, the service of science, of humanity, and the like. And at the same time he calmly writes that he often irritates the companion of his life by, as he expresses it, 'returning home in an unsober state, or disappearing for many hours with a fallen but dear creature'. . . .

Thus it was half a century ago. I was contemporary with such men. I knew Ogarëv and Herzen themselves and others of that stamp, and men educated in the same traditions. There was a remarkable absence of consistency in the lives of all these men. Together with a sincere and ardent desire for good, there was an utter looseness of personal desire, which they thought could not hinder the living of a good life nor the performance of good and even great deeds. They put unkneced loaves into a cold oven and believed that bread would be baked. And then when with advancing years they began to remark that the bread did not bake—i.e. that no good came of their lives—they saw in this something peculiarly tragic.

Of Herzen as a writer Tolstóy ultimately formed a high opinion and admitted that he exerted a very considerable influence on the mind of educated Russians.

In England, as elsewhere, Tolstoy saw what he could

of the educational methods in vogue. He also visited the House of Commons and heard Palmerston speak for three hours; but he told me he could form no opinion of the oration, for 'at that time I knew English with my eyes but not with my ears'.

While in London he received news that he had been nominated Arbiter of the Peace for his own district, near Túla. The duties of the office were to settle disputes between the serfs and their former proprietors. Except for a short period of service on the Zémstvo in 1874, this was the only official position Tolstóy ever held after leaving the army.

On 3rd March 1861 (new style), the day of Alexander II's famous Manifesto emancipating the serfs, Tolstóy left London for Russia *via* Brussels. In that city he made the acquaintance of Proudhon (the author of *What is Property?*), to whom Herzen had given him a letter of introduction. Proudhon impressed Tolstóy as a strong man who had the courage of his opinions, and though Proudhon's theories had no immediate effect on Tolstóy's life, the social, political, and economic views Tolstóy expounded a quarter of a century later were deeply dyed with Proudhonism. Another writer whose acquaintance he made in Brussels was the Polish patriot Lelewel, who had taken part in the rebellion of 1830 and was at this time a decrepit old man living in great poverty. While in Brussels Tolstóy was writing *Polikúshka* which, like *A Landlord's Morning*, implies disapproval of serfdom.

Passing through Germany he stopped at Weimar, and visited the Grand Duke Carl Alexander. Tolstóy had been reading Goethe's *Reineke Fuchs* not long before, and now visited the house in which Goethe had lived, but was more interested in a Kindergarten conducted by Minna Schelholm, who had been trained by Froebel.

At Jena he became acquainted with a young mathematician named Keller, whom he engaged to accompany him to Yásnaya to help him in his educational activities.

He also stopped at Dresden, where he again visited Auerbach, concerning whom he jots down in his Diary:

21st April, Dresden: Auerbach is a most charming man. Has given me a light. . . . He spoke of Christianity as the spirit of humanity than which there is nothing higher. He reads verse enchantingly. Of Music as *Pflichtloser Genuss* (dutyless pleasure). . . . He is 49 years old. Straightforward, youthful, believing, not troubled by negation.

From Dresden he wrote to his Aunt Tatiána that he intended to return to Yásnaya *via* St. Petersburg as he wanted to obtain permission to publish an educational magazine he was projecting.

On 22nd April 1861 he was already in Berlin, where he made the acquaintance of the head of the Teachers' Seminary, the son of the celebrated pedagogue Diesterweg, whom, to his disappointment, he found to be 'a cold, soulless pedant who thinks he can develop and guide souls of children by rules and regulations'.

On 23rd April (old style) he re-entered Russia after spending nearly ten months abroad.

He brought with him complete editions of the works of several of the greatest European writers. They were kept at the Custom House to be submitted to the Censor, and, as Tolstóy plaintively remarked nearly half a century later, 'he is still reading them'!

Among books and authors, from the time of his first to his second return from Western Europe, he read Charlotte Brontë, Homer, whom he admired more and more, the Gospels, Shakespeare: *Antony and Cleopatra* and *Midsummer Night's Dream*, Sainte-Beuve, Montluc's *Commentaires* ('a gallant Gascon'), Macaulay (whose *History* was 'too cold for me'), Montégut, Emerson, Octave Feuillet ('an immense talent'), Rabelais, Auerbach, Bacon, Riehl's *Kulturgeschichte*, which he did not like, *Adam Bede* ('very tragic, though not true and full of a single idea. That is not so with me'), Michelet's *l'Oiseau* and *l'Insecte* ('mawkish and false'), *Don Quixote*, Wiseman on Popes Leo VII and Pius VIII, and an essay of Mérimée on English art. He 'tried to read Hackländer,

horrid, *mal fait* and talentless'. He notes, 'Montaigne was the first clearly to express the idea of freedom in education. Again in education equality and freedom is the chief thing'. He also read *The Athenæum* and the *Revue des Deux Mondes*.

Of Russian writers one finds him reading Turgénev ('Ásya is rubbish'), Saltikóv ('a robust talent'), and the poets Koslów ('a delightful and immense power'), Fet, and Tyúchev. Of Katkóv, a famous publicist and editor, Tolstóy notes: 'Katkóv's limitations are such that he just suits the public', a remark applicable not to Katkóv alone among editors.

His Diary of this period consists largely of disjointed jotting of matters he wished to recollect, but among them one comes on interesting reflections, comments, or records, such as these:

Mme Kiréeva [afterwards Olga Novikóv] is an extraordinary and peculiar fool, which results from her having been considered clever as long as she was pretty. There is a whole set of such women.

On 1st January 1859 he notes: 'I must get married this year, or never.'

He much admired a young Princess Lvóv, and after a trip to Moscow where he abandoned as puerile a project that had attracted him, he notes:

9th October 1859. Visited the Lvovs. The recollection of that visit makes me howl. I decided that it should be the last attempt I would make to get married, but that too is a puerility.

After a discussion with Chichérin he notes:

Christ did not impose, but revealed, the moral law which for ever remains the standard of good and evil.

CHAPTER VII

AT YASNAYA AGAIN. TURGÉNEV. ARBITER. MAGAZINE

AFTER the winter's snow has so far thawed that sleighing is impracticable, there comes a time when there is still too much snow and the roads are too soft to allow of travelling on wheels, and transit is practically impossible. Tolstóy reached Moscow at this period of the year, but had not to wait long before the roads dried sufficiently to become passable. He made the journey southward to Túla in company with Mme Fet, wife of his friend the poet. She was travelling in her own carriage, accompanied by her maid, to the estate Fet had purchased at some distance from Yásnaya. Tolstóy had his own conveyance, but for company's sake changed places with the maid and travelled with Mme Fet. In the cool of the evening he borrowed, and wrapped himself in, a cloak of Fet's, declaring that this would certainly result in his producing a lyric poem.

After reaching Yásnaya he wrote, in the third week of
1861 May, to congratulate Fet on having become a
landed proprietor:

How long it is since we met, and how much has happened to both of us meanwhile! I do not know how to rejoice sufficiently when I hear or think of your activity as a farmer, and I am rather proud to have had at least some hand in the matter. . . . It is good to have a friend, but he may die or go away or one may not be able to keep pace with him, but Nature to which one is wedded by a Notarial Deed or to which one has been born by inheritance, is still better. It is one's own bit of Nature. She is cold, obdurate, disdainful and exacting, but then she is a friend one does not lose till death, and even then one will be absorbed into her. I am however at present less devoted to this friend, I have other affairs that attract me, yet but for the consciousness that she is there and that if I stumble she is at hand to hold on to—life would be but a sad business.

A few days later having received an invitation from Turgénev, Tolstóy paid him a visit, the first hours of which passed off to their mutual satisfaction. Turgénev had just finished his favourite novel, *Fathers and Sons*, and after dinner Tolstóy was to read it and give his opinion upon it. To do this more comfortably Tolstóy, left alone in the drawing-room, lay down on a large sofa. He began to read, but the story seemed to him so artificially constructed and so unimportant in its subject-matter, that he fell fast asleep.

‘I awoke’, he narrates, ‘with a strange sensation, and when I opened my eyes I saw Turgénev’s back just disappearing.’

In spite of this occurrence and the unpleasant feeling it produced, the two novelists set out next morning to visit Fet, who was not expecting them that day.

While the visitors rested for a couple of hours recovering from the fatigue of their journey, Mme Fet saw to it that the dinner assumed ‘a more substantial and inviting appearance’. During the meal the whole party began an animated conversation and Turgénev, always fond of good eating, fully appreciated the efforts Fet’s excellent male-cook had made. Champagne flowed as was usual at such reunions. After dinner the three friends strolled to a wood a couple of hundred yards from the house, and lying down in the high grass at its outskirts continued their talk with yet more freedom and animation.

Next morning at the usual breakfast time, about eight o’clock, the visitors entered the room where Mme Fet presided at the samovár. Fet sat at the opposite end of the table, Turgénev at the hostess’s right hand, and Tolstóy at her left. Knowing the importance Turgénev attached to the education of his natural daughter, who was being brought up in France, Mme Fet inquired whether he was satisfied with her English governess. Turgénev praised the latter highly and mentioned that, with English exactitude, she had requested him to fix the sum his daughter might give in charity. ‘And now’,

added Turgénev, 'she requires my daughter to take in hand and mend the tattered clothes of the poor.'

To Tolstóy the foreign education Turgénev was giving his daughter, who was quite forgetting her own language, was very distasteful, and this feeling no doubt showed itself in his question:

'And you consider that good?'

'Certainly: it places the doer of charity in touch with everyday needs.'

'And I consider that a well-dressed girl with dirty ill-smelling rags on her lap is acting an insincere, theatrical farce.'

'I beg you not to say that!' exclaimed Turgénev, with dilated nostrils.

'Why should I not say what I am convinced is true?' replied Tolstóy.

'Then you consider that I educate my daughter badly?'

Tolstóy replied that his thought corresponded to his speech.

Before Fet could interpose, Turgénev, white with rage, exclaimed: 'If you speak in that way I will punch your head!' and, jumping up from the table and seizing his head in his hands, rushed into the next room. A second later he returned and, addressing Mme Fet, said: 'For heaven's sake excuse my improper conduct which I deeply regret!' and again left the room.

Fet, realizing the impossibility of keeping his visitors together after what had happened, was perplexed what to do, for they had both arrived in Turgénev's vehicle and Fet, newly established in the country, though he had horses, had none broken in to drive in the only conveyance he possessed. To get Turgénev off was easy, but it was not without some difficulty and even danger from the restive horses, that Tolstóy was conveyed to the nearest post-station where a hired conveyance was procurable.

From Novosëlki, the first country house Tolstóy reached, he wrote Turgénev a letter demanding an apology, and asked for an answer to be sent to the next

post-house at Bogusláv. Turgénev, not noticing this request, sent his reply to Fet's house, so that it was several hours late in reaching Tolstóy—who was so enraged by this (as it seemed to him) fresh act of discourtesy, that from Bogusláv he sent a messenger to procure pistols, and wrote a second letter challenging Turgénev and stating that he did not wish to fight in a merely formal manner, like literary men who finish up with champagne, but was in earnest, and hoped Turgénev would meet him with pistols at the outskirt of the Bogusláv woods.

That night was a sleepless one for Tolstóy. The morning brought Turgénev's reply to his first letter; it commenced in the formal manner of polite communications:

Gracious Sir, Leo Nikoláevich!—In reply to your letter I can only repeat, what I myself considered it my duty to announce to you at Fet's, namely, that carried away by a feeling of involuntary enmity the causes of which need not here be considered, I insulted you without any definite provocation and I asked your pardon. What happened this morning proved clearly that attempts at intimacy between such opposite natures as yours and mine can lead to no good results; and I the more readily fulfil my duty to you because the present letter probably terminates our relations with one another. I heartily hope it may satisfy you, and I consent in advance to your making what use you please of it.

With perfect respect, I have the honour to remain, Gracious Sir, your most humble servant.

IV. TURGÉNEV.

Spáasski, 27th May 1861.

P S. 10.30 p.m.

Iván Petróvich has just brought back my letter, which my servant stupidly sent to Novosélki instead of to Bogusláv. I humbly beg you to excuse this accidental and regrettable mistake and I hope my messenger will still find you at Bogusláv.

Tolstóy thereupon wrote to Fet:

I could not resist opening another letter from Mr. Turgénev in reply to mine. I wish you well of your relations with that

man, but I despise him. I have written to him, and therewith have terminated all relations, except that I hold myself ready to give him any satisfaction he may desire. Notwithstanding all my apparent tranquillity I was disturbed in spirit and felt I must demand a more explicit apology from Mr. Turgénev; I did this in my letter from Novosëlki. Here is his answer, which I accept as satisfactory, merely informing him that my reason for excusing him is not the opposition of our natures but one he may himself surmise.

In consequence of the delay that occurred, besides this I sent another letter, harsh enough and containing a challenge, to which I have not received any reply, but should I receive one I shall return it unopened. So there is an end of this sad story, which if it goes beyond your house should do so with this addendum.

Turgénev's reply to the challenge came to hand later and ran as follows:

Your servant says you desire a reply to your letter, but I do not see what I can add to what I have already written, unless it be that I admit your right to demand satisfaction weapons in hand. You have preferred to accept my spoken and repeated apology. That was as you pleased. I will say without phrases that I would willingly stand your fire in order to efface my truly insane words. That I should have uttered them is so unlike the habits of my whole life that I can only attribute my action to irritability evoked by the extreme and constant antagonism of our views. This is not an apology—I mean to say, not a justification—but an explanation. And therefore at parting from you for ever—for such occurrences are indelible and irrevocable—I consider it my duty to repeat once again that in this affair you were in the right and I in the wrong. I add that what is here in question is not the courage I wish or do not wish to show, but an acknowledgement of your right to call me out to fight, in the accepted manner of course (with seconds), as well as your right to pardon me. You have chosen as you pleased, and I have only to submit to your decision. I renew my assurance of my entire respect,

IV. TURGÉNEV.

The quarrel was not however destined to die out so quickly. Even good-natured Fet got into trouble by

trying to reconcile the irascible novelists. Here is one of the notes he received from Tolstóy:

I request you not to write to me again, as I shall return your letters, as well as Turgénev's, unopened.

Fet remarks: 'So all my attempts to put the matter right ended in a formal rupture of my relations with Tolstóy, and now I cannot even remember how friendly intercourse between us was renewed.'

Before four months had passed, Tolstóy repented of his quarrel. Like Prince Nekhlúdob in *Resurrection*, he used from time to time to repent of all his sins and quarrels, and undertook a sort of spring- or autumn-cleaning of his soul. It was at such a moment that, on 25th September, he wrote to Turgénev expressing regret that their relations to one another were hostile, and he added: 'If I have insulted you, forgive me; I find it unendurably hard to think I have an enemy.' Not knowing Turgénev's address in France, he sent this letter to a bookseller in Petersburg (with whom he knew Turgénev corresponded) to be forwarded. The letter took more than three months to reach its destination, nor was this the only thing that went wrong, as is shown by the following portion of a letter, dated 8th November, from Turgénev to Fet:

Apropos, 'one more last remark' about the unfortunate affair with Tolstóy. Passing through Petersburg I learned from certain 'reliable people' (Oh, those reliable people!) that copies of Tolstóy's last letter to me (the letter in which he 'despises' me) are circulating in Moscow and are said to have been distributed by Tolstóy himself. That enraged me, and I sent him a challenge to fight when I returned to Russia. Tolstóy has answered that the circulation of the copies is pure invention, and he encloses another letter in which, recapitulating that, and how, I insulted him, he asks my forgiveness and declines my challenge. Of course the matter must end there, and I will only ask you to tell him (for he writes that he will consider any fresh communication from me to him an insult) that I myself repudiate any duel, &c., and hope the whole matter is buried for ever. His letter (apologizing) I have destroyed. Another letter which he says he sent me

through the bookseller Davidov I never received. And now as to the whole matter—*de profundis*.

Tolstóy had noted in his Diary one day in October:

Yesterday I received a letter from Turgénev in which he accuses me of saying he is a coward and of circulating copies of my letter. I have written him that it is nonsense, and I have also sent him a letter: 'You call my action dishonourable and you formerly wished to punch my head; but I consider myself guilty, ask pardon, and refuse the challenge.'

1862 Even then the matter was not at an end, for on 7th January [new style?] Turgénev writes to Fet:

And now a plain question: Have you seen Tolstóy? I have only to-day received the letter he sent me in September through Davidov's bookshop (how accurate are our Russian merchants!). In this letter he speaks of his intention to insult me, and apologizes, &c. And almost at that very time, in consequence of some gossip about which I think I wrote you, I sent him a challenge. From all this one must conclude that our constellations move through space in definitely hostile conjunction and that therefore we had better, as he himself says, avoid meeting. But you may write or tell him (if you see him) that I (without phrase or joke) *from afar* love him very much, respect him, and watch his fate with sympathetic interest, but that in proximity all takes a different turn. What's to be done? We must live as though we inhabited different planets or different centuries.

Tolstóy evidently took umbrage at Turgénev's message, and visited his wrath on Fet's innocent head. To be profoundly humble and forgiving at his own command was always, it seems, easier for Tolstóy than to allow his opponent to have an opinion of his own. Tolstóy liked things to be quite clear-cut and definite and it complicates matters to have to reckon with some one else's views. At any rate Turgénev writes:

Paris, 14 Jan. [o.s.?] 1862.

Dearest Afanásy Afanásyevich! [Fet's Christian name and patronymic.]—First of all I must ask your pardon for the quite unexpected tile (*tuile*, as the French say) that tumbled on your head as a result of my letter. The one thing which

somewhat consoles me is that I could not possibly have expected such a freak on Tolstóy's part and thought I was arranging all for the best. It seems it is a wound of a kind better not touched at all.

To judge the relations between these two great writers fairly, one must remember that Turgénev was ten years the elder and until *War and Peace* appeared ranked higher in popular esteem; yet Tolstóy showed him no deference, but on the contrary often attacked him and his views with mordant irony. Turgénev was neither ill-natured nor quarrelsome. If Tolstóy had treated him with consideration, or had been willing to let him alone, there would have been no question either of insult or of challenge. But the younger man sought the elder's company and then made himself disagreeable; and this not of malice prepense but because it was his nature to demand perfection from great men and vehemently to attack those who failed to reach the high standard he set up. This was no doubt all the more trying to Turgénev because Tolstóy neither co-operated warmly with the Liberal movement then current, nor was himself much more abstemious with regard to food, wine, women, or cards, than others of the set whom he scolded; or if he were, was so intermittently and with such serious lapses as to be little entitled to condemn others with the fervour he often displayed. On the occasion of the great quarrel Turgénev was certainly the aggressor, and his prompt apology was not addressed to Tolstóy whom he had chiefly offended but to Mme. Fet. It is however plain that he acted, as he said, on an irritable and momentary impulse. Tolstóy aggravated matters by sending a challenge before receiving a reply to his first letter, and also by suggesting that he despised Turgénev and pardoned him for reasons 'he may himself surmise'. Again, in relation to Fet, who merely wished to pour oil on the troubled waters, Tolstóy showed a strange irritability. No one however can read the *Recollections* Fet wrote thirty years later without seeing that he—who not only witnessed this affair, but had

been the confidant of both writers for years—respected Tolstóy far more than he respected Turgénev.

In this whole story one may detect traces of the qualities which made Tolstóy so interesting and so perplexing a personality. He cared intensely about everything with which he was occupied. Turgénev and Turgénev's opinions and conduct were of tremendous importance to him. So were his own views of how young ladies should be brought up. So was the question whether he ought to challenge his enemy; and later on the question whether he ought to forgive him, and whether Fet should be allowed to act as mediator. It is this fact—that he cared about things a hundred times more than other people care about them—that made Tolstóy a genius and a great writer. What was admirable in his conduct was not that he acted well (he often acted very badly) but that he ardently *wished* to act well.

The same spirit that made him so intolerant with Turgénev—his strong feeling that 'To whom much is given, of him much shall be required'—had something to do later in life with his fierce attacks on Governments, on Shakespeare, on Wagner, and on other great institutions and men. At the same time the incident throws light on that side of Tolstóy's character which brought it about that, despite the very real charm he possessed and the fact that many men and women were immensely attracted by his writings, he had few intimate friends and was constantly misunderstood.

V. P. Bótkin, who was in touch both with Tolstóy and Turgénev, wrote to Fet after hearing of the quarrel:

The scene between him [Turgénev] and Tolstóy at your house produced on me a sad impression. But do you know I believe that in reality Tolstóy has a passionately loving soul; only he wants to love Turgénev ardently, and unfortunately his impulsive feeling encounters merely mild, good-natured indifference. That is what he cannot reconcile himself to. And then (again unfortunately) his mind is in a chaos; by which I mean that it has not yet reached any definite outlook on life and the world's affairs. That is why his conviction changes so often and why he is so apt to run to extremes. His

soul burns with unquenchable thirst; I say 'unquenchable' because what satisfied it yesterday is to-day disintegrated by his analysis. But that analysis has no durable and firm reagents and consequently its results evaporate *ins blaue hinein*. Without some firm ground under one's feet it is impossible to write. And that is why at present he *cannot* write, and this will continue to be the case until his soul finds something on which it can rest.

To any one acquainted with the history of Russia at that period but not acquainted with Tolstóy's idiosyncrasies it must indeed seem strange that the story of his life can be told with so little reference to the Reform movement of the years 1860-4. Two passages written by him to Birukóv in 1904, at the time of the Revolutionary agitation during the war with Japan, state his relation to such movements with characteristic sincerity.

As to my attitude at that time [the 'sixties] to the excited condition of our whole society, I must say (and this is a good and bad trait characteristic of me) that I always involuntarily opposed any external, epidemic pressure, and that if I was excited and happy at that time it proceeded from my own personal, inner motives: those which drew me to my school work and into touch with the peasants.

I now recognize in myself the same feeling of resistance to the excitement at present prevailing, which resembles what in more timid form was then current.

Tolstóy's tendency to underrate the influence of the Liberal reformers of the 'sixties may be illustrated by an incident that occurred at a dinner in Túla. The 1861 local elections had taken place, and a public banquet was given in honour of those Arbiters of the Peace who were visiting the town. Tolstóy was at this dinner, and when the toast to the health of Alexander II, the 'Tsar-Liberator', was proposed, remarked to his neighbour: 'I drink this toast with particular pleasure. No others are needed, for in reality we owe the Emancipation to the Emperor alone.'

A yet more curious instance of the same tendency occurs in an article on *Progress and the Definition of Educa-*

tion, which he published a year later, and in which, arguing that printing has been of little use to the people, he says that:

Even taking as an example the abolition of serfdom, I do not see that printing helped the solution of the problem in a progressive sense. Had the Government not uttered its decisive word in that affair, the press would beyond doubt have explained matters in quite a different way to what it did. We saw that most of the periodicals would have demanded the emancipation of the peasants without any land, and would have produced arguments apparently just as reasonable, witty, and sarcastic [as were produced in favour of the more Liberal solution actually adopted]. . . .

If however Tolstóy did not stand in the ranks of the Reformers he was much less partisan to his own class than many of his fellow-nobles desired; and we find the Marshal of the Nobility of Túla writing to Valúev, Minister of Home Affairs, complaining of Tolstóy's appointment as Arbiter of the Peace on the ground that he was disliked by the neighbouring landowners. In consequence of this complaint Valúev made inquiries, and received a 'confidential' reply from the Governor of the Province which said:

Knowing Count Tolstóy personally as an educated man warmly sympathizing with the matter in hand, and in view of a wish expressed to me by some of the proprietors of the district that he should be appointed Arbiter, I cannot replace him by some one I do not know.

Tolstóy tried his best to act fairly between peasants and landowners, but his unsuitability for duties involving methodical care was obvious from the start.

The very first 'charter' regulating relations between a landlord and his newly liberated peasants that he sent up to the Government Board for Peasant Affairs was signed as follows: 'At the request of such-and-such peasants, because of their illiteracy, the house-serf so-and-so has signed this charter for them.' Not a single name did the charter contain! As Tolstóy had dictated the words so his servant had written them down, and

the charter had been sealed and sent off without being read over.

He could at times be wonderfully patient in dealing with the peasants though they were exasperatingly pertinacious in demanding more than it was possible to grant. An eye-witness tells how Tolstóy visited a neighbouring estate on which differences had arisen as to the land to be allotted to the peasants. He received a deputation consisting of three of the leading peasants of the village, and asked them:

‘Well, lads, what do you want?’

They explained what land they wished to have, and Tolstóy replied, ‘I am very sorry I can’t do what you want. Were I to do so I should cause your landlord a great loss’; and he proceeded to explain to them how the matter stood.

‘But you’ll manage it for us somehow, *bátushka*’ [literally ‘little father’], said the peasants.

‘No, I can’t do anything of the kind,’ repeated Tolstóy.

The peasants glanced at one another, scratched their heads, and reiterated their ‘But somehow, *bátushka*!’ and one of them added, ‘If only you want to, *bátushka*, you’ll know how to find a way to do it!’ at which the other peasants nodded their heads approvingly.

Tolstóy crossed himself, as orthodox Russians are wont to do, and said: ‘As God is holy, I swear that I can be of no use at all to you.’ But still the peasants repeated: ‘You’ll take pity on us and do it somehow, *bátushka*!’

Tolstóy at last turned vehemently to the steward who was present, and said: ‘One can sooner, like Amphion, move the hills and woods than convince peasants of anything!’

The whole conversation, says the steward, lasted more than an hour, and up to the last minute the Count retained his patient and friendly manner towards the peasants. Their obstinacy did not provoke him to utter a single harsh word.

With the landowners Tolstóy had even more trouble than with the peasants. He received many threatening

letters, plans were formed to have him beaten, he was to have been challenged to a duel, and denunciations of him were sent to the authorities.

After some three months of the work, in July 1861, he jotted down in his Diary: 'Arbitration has given me but little material [for literary work], has brought me into conflict with all the landed proprietors and upset my health.'

Here is a sample of the cases he had to deal with. A Mme Artukóv complained that a certain Mark Grigóryev (who had been a house-serf and was therefore not entitled to land) had left her, considering himself to be 'perfectly free'.

Tolstóy, in his reply to the lady, said:

Mark, by my order, is at liberty to go immediately, with his wife, where he likes; and I beg you to compensate him (1) for the three-and-a-half months he has been illegally kept at work by you since the Decree was published, and (2) for the blows still more illegally inflicted on his wife. If my decision displease you, you have a right of appeal to the Magistrates' Sessions and to the Government Sessions. I shall not enter into further explanations on this subject.—With entire respect I have the honour to remain, your humble servant,

CT. L. TOLSTÓY.

The lady appealed to the Magistrates' Sessions and Tolstóy's decision was cancelled, but on the case being carried to the Government Sessions his view prevailed.

Before he had been a year in office we find him writing to the Government of the Túla Board of Peasant Affairs as follows:

As the complaints [here follows a list of several cases] lodged against my decisions have no legal justification, yet in these and many other cases my decisions have been and are being repealed, so that almost every decision I give is subsequently reversed, and as under such conditions, destructive both of the peasants' and the landowners' confidence in the Arbiter, the latter's activity becomes not merely useless but impossible, I humbly request the Government Board to authorize one of its members to hasten the examination of the above-mentioned appeals, and I have to inform the Govern-

ment Board that until such investigations are completed I do not consider it proper that I should exercise the duties of my office, which I have therefore handed over to the senior Candidate.

The following month he resumed official work, but six weeks later, on 30th April 1862, on the ground of ill-health handed the duties over to a substitute, and on 26th May—about a year after accepting office—the Senate informed the Governor of Tula that it 'had decided to discharge the Lieutenant of Artillery, Count Leo Tolstóy, on the ground of ill-health' from the post of Arbiter of the Peace.

His unsatisfactory experience of administrative work perhaps increased the anti-Governmental bias shown in his later works. He certainly shared Rousseau's dislike of civil and criminal law when he wrote in his *Confession*:

The justice and the inutility of my appeals left in my mind a germ of indignation against our stupid civil institutions in which the true welfare of the public and veritable justice are always sacrificed to I know not what apparent order, really destructive of all order, and which merely adds the sanction of public authority to the oppression of the weak and the iniquity of the strong.

We may at any rate be sure that tiresome, petty, administrative work, never quite satisfactory, and at best consisting of compromises and decisions based on necessity rather than on such principles of abstract justice as were dear to Tolstóy's soul, could never be a satisfactory occupation for him. He had not the plodding patience and studious moderation such work demands, nor could his impulsive genius find scope in it. It was never easy for him to submit to the direction of others or to have to reckon with their opinions and wishes. Like Rousseau, it suited him better to reform the world on paper, or even to alter his own habits of life, than to concern himself with the slow social progress, the bit-by-bit amelioration, which alone is possible

to those harnessed to the car that bears a whole society of men.

Tolstóy used at this time to find recreation in hunting, and often went for days together with his friend Prince D. D. Obolénski, who describes him as a bold and active hunter, leaping all sorts of obstacles, and a wonderful man to talk to.

Concurrently with his duties as Arbiter, Tolstóy carried on an enterprise in which he had to deal with people younger and more easy to mould than the peasants and proprietors whose quarrels he found it so hard to adjust, and from the autumn of 1859 to that of 1862 he devoted himself whole-heartedly to the task of educating the peasant children of Yásnaya and the surrounding district.

As we have already seen, a chief aim of his travels abroad was to study the theory and practice of education, and he set to work on the school at Yásnaya most enthusiastically. The monthly magazine, *Yásnaya Polyána* (now a bibliographical rarity) which he produced and edited during 1862, expressed his theories of education and made known the results attained in his school. Articles published in it (and republished in his collected writings) give a vivid description of the work carried on in November and December 1861. In one edition after another of Tolstóy's writings, this article is called 'Yásno-Polyána School in Nov. and Dec. 1862', though it appeared in the first number of *Yásnaya Polyána* in February of that year. In small matters of detail of this kind Tolstóy was always careless. Like many Russian magazines, *Yásnaya Polyána* usually appeared late, and to begin with, the January number was several weeks behind time. It had a very limited circulation and he lost 3,000 rubles on the twelve numbers that were issued.

In his educational work Tolstóy showed the qualities and limitations that marked his activities generally. There was the same characteristic selection of a task of great importance, the same readiness to sweep aside and condemn nearly all that humanity till then had

accomplished, the same conviction that he could untie the Gordian knot, and the same power of devoted genius enabling him actually to achieve much more than seemed possible, though not a tithe of what he set out to do.

His educational articles are so original and contain so much sound sense that, extreme as some of his propositions may be, they deserve careful consideration. He defines Education as: *a human activity, having for its basis a desire for equality and a constant tendency to advance in knowledge.* This he illustrates by saying that the aim of a teacher of arithmetic should be to enable his pupil to grasp all the laws of mathematical reasoning he is himself master of; the aim of a teacher of French, or chemistry, or philosophy, should be similar. As soon as that aim is attained the activity will naturally cease. Everywhere and always, teaching that makes the pupil the master's equal has been considered good. The more nearly and rapidly this is accomplished the better; the less nearly and the more slowly it is accomplished the worse. Similarly in literature (an indirect method of teaching) those books are written best in which the author succeeds in transmitting his whole message most easily to the reader.

By 'a constant tendency to advance in knowledge' Tolstóy meant that the equality aimed at in education can only be obtained on the higher and not on the lower level: that is to say, not by the teacher forgetting what he knows, but by the pupil acquiring the teacher's knowledge. Much tuition however is based not on the desire to equalize knowledge but on quite false foundations.

These are: (1) First and commonest, the child learns in order not to be punished, (2) the child learns to earn a reward, (3) the child learns in order to be better than others, (4) the child or young man learns in order to obtain an advantageous position in the world.

Referring to the practice of sending boys to school not for their natural development but that they may be moulded into a set form, Tolstóy declared that 'Education, as a deliberate moulding of people into certain forms is *sterile, illegitimate, and impossible*'.

He strongly disapproved of examinations, as tending to arbitrariness on the part of the examiners and deception on the part of the pupils.

Under what circumstances, he asks, can a pupil acquire knowledge most rapidly? 'A child or man is receptive only when he is aroused, and therefore to regard a merry spirit in school as an enemy or a hindrance is the crudest of blunders.'

The pupil's state of mind is the most important condition of successful education and to secure good results freedom is indispensable. No child should be forced to learn what it does not want to or when it does not wish to.

One need only glance at one and the same child at home or in the street, and at school. Here you see a vivacious inquisitive being with a smile in his eye and on his mouth, seeking information everywhere as a pleasure and clearly and often forcibly expressing his thoughts in his own way; while there you see a weary, shrinking, creature repeating merely with his lips some one else's thoughts in some one else's words with an air of fatigue, fear, and listlessness—a creature whose soul has retreated like a snail into its shell. One need but glance at these two conditions to see which of them is the more conducive to the child's development. That strange physiological condition which I call the 'School state of mind' and which unfortunately we all know so well, consists in the higher capacities: imagination, creative power, and reflection, yielding place to a semi-animal capacity to pronounce words without imagination or reflection.

When the pupils have been reduced to this 'School state of mind' we encounter those 'not accidental but often-repeated cases' of the stupidest boy being at the top of the class and the cleverest boy at the bottom.

In short, a child's mental capacities are really active only when that child is free, and the teacher's chief task lies 'in studying the free child' and discovering how to supply him with knowledge. Therefore 'the only method of education is experiment, and its only criterion is *freedom*.'

Attempts to enforce obedience and quietness in school-rooms convert schools into places of torture, which

have a stupefying effect well called by the Germans *Verdummen*.

Schools are not arranged to make it convenient for children to learn, but to make it convenient for teachers to teach. The voices, movements, and mirth of the children, which form a necessary condition of their studying successfully, incommode the teachers, and therefore in the prison-like schools of to-day, questions, conversation, and movement, are forbidden.

Schools based on compulsion supply, 'not a shepherd for the flock but a flock for the shepherd'.

To deal successfully with any object it is necessary to study it, and in education the object is a free child; yet the pedagogues wish to teach in their own way—the way that seems good in their own eyes, and when this does not act they want to alter not their way of teaching, but the nature of the child. . . . Not till experiment becomes the basis of the School, and every school is, so to say, a pedagogic laboratory, will schools cease to lag behind the general level of the world's progress.

For boarding-schools Tolstóy had scant respect:

At home the comforts of life—water, fires, good food, a well-cooked dinner, the cleanliness and comfort of the rooms—all depended on the work and care of the mother and of the whole family. The more work and care the greater the comfort, the less work and care the less the comfort. A simple matter this no doubt, but more educational, I think, than the French language or information about Alexander the Great. In a boarding-school this constant, vital, reward of labour is so put out of sight that not only is the dinner no better or worse, the napkins no cleaner or dirtier, and the floors no brighter or duller, because of the girl's exertion or non-exertion, but she has not even a cell or corner of her own to keep straight or leave untidy at her pleasure, and she has no chance of making a costume for herself out of scraps and ribbons.

His general charge against day-schools, boarding-schools, and universities alike is that:

At the base of them all lies one and the same principle: the right of one man, or of a small group of men, to shape other people as they please.

He adds that:

It is not enough for School to tear children away from real life for six hours a day during the best years of their life, it wishes to tear three-year-old children from their mother's influence. Institutions have been contrived (*Kleinkinderbewahranstalten*, infant schools, *salles d'asile*) about which we shall have to speak more in detail later on. It only remains to invent a steam-engine which will replace the nursing mother! All agree that schools are imperfect; I, personally, am convinced that they are noxious.

He argues that no man or set of men has any right to force any particular kind of education on any one else. The teacher has no right to do more than offer such knowledge as he possesses, and should respect the child's right to reject it as indigestible, or badly served up:

On what grounds does the School of to-day teach this and not that, and in this and not that way?

Where in our day can we get such faith in the indubitability of our knowledge as would give us a right to educate people compulsorily? Take any medieval school before or after Luther, take the whole scholastic literature of the Middle Ages, what a strength of belief and what a firm indubitable knowledge of what was true and what was false we see in them! It was easy for them to know that a knowledge of Greek was the one essential condition of education, for Aristotle's works were in Greek and no one doubted the truth of his propositions till centuries later. How could the monks help demanding the study of the Holy Scriptures, which stood on an immutable foundation? It was well for Luther to demand the compulsory study of Hebrew, being sure, as he was, that in that language God himself had revealed truth to man. Evidently as long as man's critical sense was not aroused the school had to be dogmatic, and it was natural for pupils to learn by heart the truths revealed by God, as well as Aristotle's science, and the poetic beauties of Virgil and Cicero. For centuries after, no one could imagine any truer truth or more beautiful beauty. But what is the position of the schools of our time which retain these same dogmatic principles while, in the room next to the class where the immortality of the soul is taught, it is suggested to the pupils that the nerves common to man and to the frog are what used to be called 'the soul'; and where after hearing the story

of Joshua the son of Nun read to him without explanations, the pupil learns that the sun never did go round the earth; and when after the beauties of Virgil have been explained to him, he finds the beauties of Alexandre Dumas (whose novels he can buy for sixpence) much greater; when the only belief held by the teacher is that nothing is true, but that whatever exists is reasonable, and that progress is good and backwardness bad though nobody knows in what this progress, so generally believed in, consists?

In another article he says:

Luther insists on teaching the Holy Scriptures from the originals and not from the commentaries of the Fathers of the Church. Bacon enjoins the study of Nature from Nature and not from the books of Aristotle. Rousseau wants to teach life from life itself as he understands it and not from previous experiments. Each step forward in the philosophy of pedagogics merely consists in freeing the schools from the idea of teaching the younger generations what the elder generations believed to be science, and in substituting studies that accord with the needs of the younger generations.

Again he says:

It is very usual to read and hear it said that home conditions, the coarseness of parents, field labour, village games, and so forth, are the chief hindrances to school-work. Possibly they really do interfere with the kind of school-work aimed at by the pedagogues, but it is time we understood that these conditions are the chief bases of all education, and far from being inimical to, or hindrances of, the School, are its first and chief motive power. . . . The wish to know anything whatever, and the very questions to which it is the School's business to reply, arise entirely from those home conditions. All instruction should be simply a reply to questions put by life. But School far from evoking questions, fails even to answer those which life suggests. . . . To such questions the child receives no reply, more especially as the police regulations of the School do not allow him to open his mouth even when he wants to be let out for a minute, but oblige him to make signs, so as not to break the silence or disturb the teacher.

The great questions, Tolstóy says, are: (1) What must I teach? and (2) How must I teach it? He remarks that a couple of centuries ago neither in Russia nor in

Western Europe could these questions have arisen. Education was then bound up with religion, and to become a scholar meant to learn the Scriptures. In Mohammedan countries this union of religion with education still exists in full force. To learn, means to learn the Koran and therefore to learn Arabic. But as soon as the criterion of what to learn ceased to be religion, and the School became independent of the Church, the question of what to teach was bound to arise. That it did not arise suddenly was due to the fact that the emancipation of School from Church took place gradually. But the day has at last come when the question must be faced; and no clear guidance is given us either by philosophy or by any definite consensus of opinion among those concerned with education. In the higher schools some advocate a classical, others a scientific education, while in the primary schools, if the education is controlled by the priests it is carried on in one way, and if it is controlled by the anti-clericals in another. Under these circumstances the only possible criterion must be the wish of the pupils, or of their parents. Tolstóy goes on to maintain that the demand of the mass of the Russian people was for tuition in the Russian and Church-Slavonic languages, and in mathematics.

As to *how* to teach, he contends that this resolves itself into the problem, How to establish the best possible relations between those who want to learn and those who want to teach, and he says:

Probably no one will deny that the best relation between a teacher and his pupil is a natural one, and that the opposite to a natural one is a compulsory one. If that be so, then the measure of all scholastic methods consists in the greater or lesser naturalness, and consequently in the more or less compulsion that is employed. The less the children are compelled the better is the method, the more they are compelled the worse is the method. I am glad it is not necessary for me to prove this obvious truth. All are agreed that it cannot be good for health to employ foods, medicines, or exercises, which create disgust or pain, and so also in learning, there can be no need to compel children to grind at anything dull or repugnant

to them, and if it seems necessary to use compulsion, that fact merely proves the imperfection of the methods employed. All who have taught children have probably noticed that the worse the teacher knows the subject he is dealing with and the less he likes it the more stern he has to be and the more compulsion he has to use, while on the contrary, the better the teacher knows and loves his subject the more free and natural will be his tuition.

If history be closely examined it will be found that every advance in pedagogics has consisted merely in a diminution of compulsion, a facilitation of study, and a greater and greater approximation to natural relations between teacher and pupil.

People have asked, How can we find the degree of freedom to be allowed in school? To which I reply that the limit of that freedom is naturally defined by the teacher, by his knowledge, and by his capacity to manage the school. Such freedom cannot be dictated; its measure is merely the result of the greater or lesser knowledge and talent possessed by the master. Freedom is not a rule, but serves as a gauge when comparing one school with another or when judging new methods. The school in which there is less compulsion is better than the one in which there is more. That method is good which when introduced into a school does not necessitate any increase of discipline, while that which necessitates greater severity is certainly bad.

From his main subject of Education Tolstóy digresses into a discussion of other problems, in a way which reminds one of the remarkable essays he began to pour forth a quarter of a century later.

That he had been somewhat influenced by the Slavophiles is indicated by his readiness to assume that Russia may advance along a line of her own entirely different from the one Western nations have travelled. 'Progress', in which like almost all his contemporaries he had believed, he now questions, and he indulges in a sharp attack on Macaulay for the third chapter of his *History*, which he says contains no proof that any real progress has been achieved. Buckle also is roughly handled for the assumption of progress that underlies his *History of Civilization*, but most scathing of all is his onslaught on

Hegel who till Darwin appeared was the rock on which the intellectual Liberals took their stand.

Interesting, stimulating, and suggestive as Tolstóy's articles were, and valuable as was the experience gained in his school, he met with very little encouragement in educational circles.

In an article written thirteen years later, he says of his attempts in 1859-62:

At that time I met with no sympathy in the educational journals nor even with any contradiction, but only with the completest indifference to the question I was raising. There were, it is true, some attacks on a few insignificant details, but the question itself evidently interested no one. I was young at that time and this indifference galled me. I did not understand that I with my question: How do you know what and how to teach? was like a man who in an assembly of Turkish Pashas discussing the collection of taxes from the people, should say to them: Gentlemen, before discussing how much to take from each man we must first consider what right we have to collect taxes at all? Obviously the Pashas would continue to discuss the methods of collecting and would ignore the irrelevant question.

Before proceeding to tell of the actual working of the Yásnaya Polyána school there is one matter to be noted, small indeed in itself but characteristic, and helpful for an understanding of Tolstóy's later development.

His personal honour has never been questioned, and the reader will remember that at Sevastopol he had refused to take money which according to the long-standing regimental custom was at his disposal. Well, in his magazine he printed a story written by one of the schoolboys, and appraised it with enthusiasm. The father of a family, who had been wretchedly poor, returns from the army with money to spare and explains the matter to his wife by saying: 'I was paymaster and paid the soldiers. Some money used to remain over and so I put it by.'

Commenting on this, Tolstóy says:

It is revealed that the soldier has become rich and has done

so in the simplest and most natural manner, just as almost everybody does who becomes rich—that is, by other people's, the Crown's or somebody's, money remaining in his hands owing to a fortunate accident. Some readers have remarked that this incident is immoral, and that the people's conception of the Crown as a milch cow should be eradicated and not confirmed. But not to speak of its artistic truth, I particularly value that trait in the story. Does not the Crown money always stop somewhere? And why should it not once in a way stop with a homeless soldier like Gordéy? . . .

The mention of the Crown money, which at first seems immoral, in our opinion has a most sweet and touching character. How often a writer of our circle, when wishing to show his hero as an ideal of honesty, naïvely displays to us the dirty and depraved nature of his own imagination! Here on the contrary the author has to make his hero happy. His return to his family would suffice for that, but it was also necessary to remove the poverty which for so many years had weighed on the family. Where was he to take money from? From the impersonal Crown! If the author is to give him wealth it has to be taken from some one, and it could not have been found in a more legitimate or reasonable way.

Tolstóy's attitude is remarkable. He always had a keen sense of personal morality, but when public morality was in question his decisions sometimes seem faulty.

Passing from the moral to the economic aspect of the matter, it sounds strange to Western ears to hear the medieval or Oriental conception so boldly announced that property 'has to be taken from some one' before it can be obtained. In our world wealth has during the last few generations been increased enormously by inventions, organization, division of labour, and skilful utilization of the forces of Nature, as well as by co-operation and the bringing together into one place of mutually helpful industries and individuals, and it has become impossible for us to believe that the *only* way to obtain wealth is by depriving others of what they already possess.

CHAPTER VIII

THE SCHOOL

AFTER leaving the University Tolstóy had, at the end of the 'forties, started a school for the children of his serfs, in which he himself taught, but his chief educational activity was during the years 1860, '61, and '62. The results he attained were very remarkable.

The activity of which an account is here given began in the autumn of 1859, some nine or ten months before his second journey abroad, during which visit he both studied educational methods and wrote on education. It is true that his main preoccupation with the school occurred after he returned home the second time, but the school is here dealt with in a separate chapter as a matter of convenience and despite the fact that chronologically what is here narrated overlaps with events mentioned in the two previous chapters. In December 1860, when he was in the south of France after his brother's death, he wrote to Countess A. A. Tolstóy:

What can I say about myself? You know, I am sure, about my occupation with a school since last year. I can quite sincerely say that it is now the one interest that attaches me to life. Unfortunately this winter I cannot occupy myself with it actively and on the spot, but can only prepare for the future.

As already mentioned, his magazine, besides its theoretical articles, contained others describing the work done at his school, and from these we learn in his own words how Tolstóy and his pupils, with three masters (including the young German, Keller, whom he had brought with him from abroad), were occupied in November and December 1861. The following passages are part of his description:

No one brings anything with him, neither books nor copy-books. No homework is set them. Not only do they carry

nothing in their hands, they have nothing to carry even in their heads. They are not obliged to remember any lesson, nor any of yesterday's work. They are not tormented by thought of the impending lesson. They bring only themselves, their receptive nature, and an assurance that it will be as jolly in school to-day as it was yesterday. They do not think of their classes till they have begun. No one is ever scolded for being late and they never are late, except perhaps some of the older boys whose fathers occasionally keep them at home to do some work. In such cases the boy comes to school running fast and panting. Until the teacher arrives some gather at the porch pushing one another off the steps or sliding on the ice-covered path, and some go into the rooms. When it is cold, while waiting for the master they read, write, or play about. The girls do not mix with the boys. When the boys take any notice of the girls they never address any one of them in particular, but always speak to them collectively: 'Hey, girls, why don't you come and slide?' or, 'Look how frozen the girls are', or, 'Now girls, all of you against me!'

Suppose by the time-table the lesson for the youngest class is elementary reading, for the second advanced reading, and for the third mathematics. The teacher enters the room on the floor of which the boys are lying in a heap, shouting, 'The heap's too small!' or, 'Boys, you're choking me!' or, 'Don't pull my hair!' &c.

'Peter Mihálylich!' cries a voice from the bottom of the heap to the teacher as he enters: 'Tell them to stop!'—'Good morning, Peter Mihálylich!' cry others, continuing their scrimmage. The teacher takes the books and hands them to those who have followed him to the cupboard, while from the heap of boys on the floor those on top, still sprawling, demand books. The heap gradually diminishes. As soon as most of the boys have taken books, the rest run to the cupboard crying, 'Me too! Me too!'—'Give me yesterday's book!'—'Give me Kóltsov!' and so forth. If a couple of boys excited by their struggle still remain on the floor, those who have taken books and settled down shout at them, 'What are you up to? We can't hear anything! Stop it!' The excited ones submit and, panting, take to their books, and only just at first swing their legs with unspent excitement as they sit reading. The spirit of war flies away and the spirit of reading reigns in the room. With the same ardour with which he pulled Mítka's hair he now reads Kóltsov's works, with almost clenched teeth, with sparkling eyes, and oblivious of all

around him but his book. To tear him from his reading would now need as much effort as formerly to tear him from his wrestling.

They sit where they like: on the benches, tables, window-sills, floor, or in the arm-chair. The girls always sit together. Friends from the same village, especially the little ones (among whom there is most comradeship), always sit together. As soon as one of them decides that he will sit in a certain corner, all his chums, pushing and diving under the forms, get there too, and sit together looking about them with faces that express as much happiness and satisfaction as though, having settled in that place, they would certainly be happy for the rest of their lives. A large arm-chair (which has somehow found its way into the room) is an object coveted by the more independent personalities. . . . As soon as one of them decides to sit in it another discerns his intention from his looks and they collide and squeeze in. One dislodges the other and, curling up, sprawls with his head far below the back, but reads, like the rest, quite absorbed in his work. During lessons I have never seen them whispering, pinching, giggling, laughing behind their hands, or complaining of one another to the teacher.

The two lower classes sort themselves in one room, the upper class in another. The teacher appears, and in the first class all surround him at the blackboard, or lie on the forms or sit on the table near him or near one of the boys who reads. If it is a writing lesson they place themselves in a more orderly way but keep getting up to look at one another's exercise books and to show their own to the teacher. By the time-table there should be four lessons before dinner, but sometimes in practice these become three or two and may be on quite other subjects. The teacher may begin with arithmetic and pass on to geometry, or may begin with Sacred History and end up with grammar. Sometimes teacher and pupils are so carried away that a lesson lasts three hours instead of one. Sometimes the pupils themselves cry: 'Go on, go on!' and shout contemptuously to any who are tired: 'If you're tired go to the little ones!'

In my opinion this external disorder is useful and necessary, however strange and inconvenient it may seem to the teacher. Of its advantages I shall have frequent occasion to speak but of its apparent disadvantages I will say:

First, this disorder, or free order, only frightens us because we were ourselves educated in and are accustomed to some-

thing quite different. Secondly, in this as in many similar cases, coercion is used only from hastiness or lack of respect for human nature. We think the disorder is growing greater and greater and has no limit. We think there is no way of stopping it except by force; but one need only wait a little and the disorder (or animation) calms down of itself and calms down into a far better and more durable order than any we could devise.

In another place he says:

Our school evolved freely from the principles brought into it by the teachers and pupils. In spite of the predominant influence of the teacher the pupil always had the right not to go to school, and even when in school not to listen to the teacher. The teacher had the right not to admit a pupil. . . .

Submitting naturally only to laws derived from their own nature, children revolt and rebel when subjected to your premature interference. They do not believe in the validity of your bells, and time-tables, and rules. How often have I seen children fighting. The teacher rushes to separate them, and the separated enemies look at one another askance and even in the stern teacher's presence cannot refrain from giving one another a parting blow yet more painful than its predecessors. How often, any day, do I see some Kirúshka, clenching his teeth, fly at Taráska, seize his hair and throw him to the ground, apparently—though it costs him his life—determined to maim his foe; yet not a minute passes before Taráska is already laughing under Kirúshka. One and then the other moderates his blows, and before five minutes have passed they have made it up and off they go to sit together.

The other day, between lessons, two boys were struggling in a corner. The one, a remarkable mathematician about ten years old, is in the second class; the other, a close-cropped lad, the son of a servant, is a clever but vindictive, tiny, black-eyed lad nicknamed Pussy. Pussy seized the mathematician's long hair and jammed his head against the wall, the mathematician vainly clutched at Pussy's close-cropped bristles. Pussy's black eyes gleamed triumphantly. The mathematician, hardly refraining from tears, kept saying: 'Well, well, what of it?' But though he tried to keep up appearances it was plain he was faring badly. This went on for some time and I was in doubt what to do. 'A fight, a fight!' shouted the boys and crowded towards the corner. The little ones laughed, but the bigger ones, though they did not interfere,

exchanged serious glances and their silence and these glances did not escape Pussy's observation. He understood that he was doing something wrong, and began to smile shamefacedly, and by degrees let go of the mathematician's hair. The mathematician shook himself free and, giving Pussy a push that banged the back of the latter's head against the wall, went off satisfied. Pussy began to cry and rushed after his enemy, hitting him as hard as he could on his sheepskin coat, but without hurting him. The mathematician wished to pay him back, but at that moment several disapproving voices were raised. 'There now; he's fighting a little fellow!' cried the onlookers, 'get away, Pussy!'—and therewith the affair ended as though it had never occurred, except, I think, that both combatants retained a dim consciousness that fighting is unpleasant because both get hurt.

In this case I seemed to detect a feeling of fairness influencing the crowd, but how often such affairs are settled so that one does not know what law has decided them and yet both sides are satisfied! How arbitrary and unjust by comparison are all School methods of dealing with such cases. 'You are both to blame: kneel down!' says the teacher; and the teacher is wrong, because one boy is to blame and that one triumphs while on his knees and chews the cud of his unexpended anger, while the innocent one is doubly punished. . . .

I am convinced that School should not interfere with that part of education which belongs to the family. The School should not, and has no right to, reward or punish; and the best police and administration of a School consists in giving full freedom to the pupils to learn and get on among themselves as they like. I am convinced of this, and yet the customary School habits are still so strong in us that in the Yásno-Polyána school we frequently break this rule. . . .

Though subsequently in his *Confession* Tolstóy referred scornfully to his educational writings, the actual working of his school was remarkably successful and the ideas expressed in his educational articles—which fill a whole volume—are highly interesting. Education has since made much progress in the direction he indicated, but his theories and practice were far more radical than any school system now existing, or likely to exist unless and until teachers are obtainable as able and as devoted to the task as he was himself.

N. V. Uspénski, the writer, narrates that he visited Yásnaya Polyána in 1862, and Tolstóy having to leave him alone for a while asked him to glance at some of the compositions the boys had written in school. Taking up one of these, Uspénski read:

One day Lëv Nikoláevich [Tolstóy] called Savóskin up to the blackboard and told him to solve a problem in arithmetic. 'If I give you five rolls and you eat one of them, how many rolls will you have left?' . . . Savóskin could nohow solve this problem, and the Count pulled his hair for it. . . .

When Tolstóy returned Uspénski pointed out to him this essay, and Tolstóy, sighing heavily, crossed his hands before him and merely said: 'Life in this world is a hard task.'

Uspénski considered that he had unearthed an extraordinary contradiction between theory and practice, but no one realizing the difficulty and novelty of Tolstóy's attempt and how far he was from claiming perfection for himself or his achievements, should agree with Uspénski. On the contrary, the essay proves a freedom of relation between teacher and pupil which could not have existed had the hair-pulling been other than impulsive and exceptional.

The school was closed, or nearly so, during the summer, as most of the pupils then helped their parents with field work, obtaining, Tolstóy considered, more mental development that way than they could have done in any school. To make up for this the hours of study in winter were long.

The classes generally finish about eight or nine o'clock (unless carpentering keeps the elder boys somewhat later), and the whole band run shouting into the yard and there, calling to one another, begin to separate, making for different parts of the village. Occasionally they arrange to coast down-hill to the village in a large sledge that stands outside the gate. They tie up the shafts, throw themselves into it, and, squealing, disappear from sight in a cloud of snow, leaving here and there on their path black patches of children who have tumbled out. In the open air out of school (for all its freedom) new relations are formed between pupil and teacher, freer, simpler

and more trustful—those very relations which seem to us to be the ideal which School should aim at.

In the volume of this edition containing *What is Art?* the reader will find a charming account of a walk Tolstóy had with the little peasant boys, Fédka, Sëmka, and Prónka, and of a discussion on the problems of art which started him on a line of reflection that, forty years later, caused him to write *What is Art?*, readers of which should bear in mind that when he declares that children, peasants, and savages, if they are capable of sharing another's feelings can be touched by art that is clear, brief, and sincere enough, he is not uttering a paradox, still less is he making a peasant's taste the criterion of art, but he is speaking of what he knew and testifying to what he had seen. It is, he says, as easy for such a man to recognize a work of art that appeals to him, 'as for an animal of unspoilt scent to follow the trace he needs. . . . The animal unerringly finds *what he needs*. So also the man, if only his natural qualities have not been perverted, will without fail select from among thousands of others the real work of art *he requires*—that infects *him* with the feeling experienced by the artist'. This is not to say that the peasant child, or savage, can appreciate each and every work of art, but that a supreme artist, great enough to be quite clear and sincere, can reach all who retain 'that simple feeling familiar to the plainest man and even to a child, that sense of infection with another's feelings—compelling us to rejoice in another's gladness, to sorrow at another's grief, and to mingle souls with another—which is the very essence of art'.

One phase of Tolstóy's experience continually throws light on another, so that an acquaintance with his life helps us to see the simple sanity of opinions that might perplex readers who regarded them as abstract propositions not rooted in experience.

The peasants at first were afraid of a school run in such an unusual manner, but before long they gained confidence and the report became current among them that: 'At Yásno-Polyána school they learnt everything,

including all the sciences, and there are such clever masters that it is dreadful; it is said that they even imitate thunder and lightning. Anyway the lads understand well and have begun to read and write.' Another very general opinion was that: 'They teach the boys everything (like gentlemen's sons); much of it is no use, but still, as they quickly learn to read, it is worth sending the children there.'

Naturally Tolstóy, himself in those days an ardent gymnast, had parallel and horizontal bars put up and gave the children physical training. To the effects of this on the stomach the village mothers did not fail to attribute any digestive troubles that befell their children from time to time, especially when the long Lenten fast was succeeded by a return to more appetizing food, or when, after such luxuries had long been lacking, fresh vegetables came into use in summer.

In his account of the Yásno-Polyána school Tolstóy tells us there were about forty pupils enrolled, but more than thirty were rarely present at a time; among them were four or five girls, and sometimes three or four male adults who came either for a month or for a whole winter. Later on the number of pupils rose to seventy. Most of the boys were from seven to ten years old. Tolstóy found that children learn to read most rapidly, easily, and well, between the ages of six and eight.

Before the Emancipation education for serfs was rare, rudimentary, and of very poor quality, except in quite exceptional cases. In 1860 however Tolstóy aimed at the organization of a 'Society for the Education of the People' throughout the country; but the Government would not allow it and, as he wrote to a correspondent, he alone continued to form 'a secret Society for the Education of the People'.

After the Emancipation in 1861, however, the Government began to prompt the peasants to open schools for themselves, and those in Tolstóy's neighbourhood applied to him, as Arbiter of the Peace, to find them teachers. Tolstóy procured some students who in consequence of

an agitation that had then occurred had been dismissed from the University, and in 1862 there were thirteen schools in the surrounding villages with teachers recommended by him, and run on lines similar to those followed in his own school. His relations with these teachers were excellent. Speaking of them to P. I. Birukóv in 1908, he remarked: 'What fellows they were! Pure, self-sacrificing—no idea of dissatisfaction and no hesitation about living at Babúрино [a poor little village near Yásnaya] . . . How different from the young folk of to-day!'

They submitted to Tolstóy's influence instinctively, and were inspired by the enthusiasm with which he devoted his whole time and strength to the children. Like him they were occupied with their pupils from about 8 a.m. till late at night, and like him devoted their whole souls to the work. 'This intense daily activity absorbs me so that I have no wish to abandon it,' wrote one of them. 'I could spend the long winter evenings with the pupils, listening to their prayers and their thoughts. My life had mingled with theirs. I felt happy when they were merry,' wrote another.

The children came to love their schools. It was an example of the influence Tolstóy exercised when enthusiastic about any undertaking. It was certainly his energy and devotion that inspired these teachers to live in such poor and unaccustomed surroundings, in rough peasant huts, devoting themselves from morning to night to teaching peasant lads—for when Tolstóy ceased to devote himself to the task, these teachers all soon abandoned the work.

In the third year of the existence of the school the distrust the peasants had felt had been so completely overcome that some well-to-do peasants even brought their boys distances of twenty and thirty miles to Yásnaya Polyána. Tolstóy insisted that the success of the schools and the very rapid progress made by the pupils resulted not from any particular 'method', but from the free and natural relations that existed between teachers and pupils, and from the readiness of the teachers

constantly to experiment and adapt their teaching to the changing requirements of the scholars.

There were generally from five to seven lessons a day. The teachers kept diaries of their work, and discussed matters together on Sundays, when they drew up plans for the coming week. These plans were however not strictly adhered to, but were constantly modified to meet the pupils' desires.

Tolstóy's sister told me of another Sunday occupation at Yásnaya Polyána in those days. Tolstóy used to invite the boys from all the neighbouring schools and play games with them; the favourite game being *Barres*, which I assume to be a form of 'Storm the Castle', or possibly 'Prisoners' Base'.

He came to the conclusion that teachers involuntarily endeavour to find a method of teaching convenient for themselves, but that the more convenient a method is for the teacher the less convenient it usually is for the pupil; and only *that* method is good which satisfies the pupils.

He always avoided questioning a boy separately on a lesson. When the master had finished speaking, or when something had been read, the whole class might repeat what they had understood, and only if the clamour was too great would the master ask some, or most, or all but one, of them to be quiet, that the repetition might be heard.

His theory of freedom as the basis of success in instruction was put to a rude test by the fact that his pupils, at first, made little or no headway in learning to read. In one of his articles he says:

The simple thought that the time had not yet come for good reading and that there was at present no need of it, but that the pupils would themselves find the best method when the need arose, only recently entered my head.

After telling how the boys at first found it difficult to master the mechanical process of reading, Tolstóy goes on to tell how progress was suddenly made in the class owing to what seemed an accident.

..In the class of advanced reading some one book is used by each boy reading in turn, and then all recounting its contents together. They had been joined that autumn by an extremely talented lad, T., who had studied for two years with a sacristan and was therefore ahead of them all in reading. He reads as we do, and the pupils only understand anything of the advanced reading (and then not very much of it) when he reads, and yet each of them wishes to read. But as soon as a bad reader begins the others express dissatisfaction, especially when the story is interesting. They laugh and get cross, and the bad reader feels ashamed and endless disputes arise. Last month one of the boys announced that he would, at any cost, manage within a week to read as well as T.; others made the same announcement, and suddenly mechanical reading became their favourite occupation. For an hour or an hour-and-a-half at a time they would sit without tearing themselves away from the books, which they did not understand; and they began taking books home with them, and really within three weeks they made such progress as one could not have expected.

In their case the reverse had happened of what usually occurs with those who learn the rudiments. Generally a man learns to read, and finds nothing he cares to read or understand. In this case the pupils were convinced that there is something worth reading and understanding, but felt that they lacked the capacity, and so they set to work to become proficient readers.

A difficulty of enormous importance was the absence of books really suitable for simple folk to read.

The insoluble problem was that for the education of the people an ability and a desire to read good books is essential. Good books are however written in a literary language the people don't understand. To learn to understand it one would have to read a great deal, and people won't read willingly unless they understand what they read.

Connected with this difficulty of finding books suited for peasants and peasant children, was the parallel difficulty of finding literary subjects that interested them. This was best met by reading the Old Testament stories:

A knowledge of Sacred History was demanded both by the

pupils themselves and by their parents. Of all the oral subjects I tried during three years, nothing so suited the understanding and mental condition of the boys as the Old Testament. The same was the case in all the schools that came under my observation. I tried the New Testament, I tried Russian History and Geography, I tried explanations of natural phenomena (so much advocated to-day), but it was all listened to unwillingly and quickly forgotten. But the Old Testament was remembered and eagerly narrated both in class and at home, and it was so well remembered that after two months the children wrote Scripture tales from memory with very slight omissions.

It seems to me that the book of the childhood of the race will always be the best book for the childhood of each man. It seems impossible to replace that book. To alter or abbreviate the Bible as is done in Sonntag's and other school primers, appears to me bad. All, every word in it, is right both as revelation and as art. Read about the creation of the world in the Bible and then read it in an abbreviated Sacred History, and the alteration of the Bible into the Sacred History will appear to you quite unintelligible. The latter can only be learnt by heart while the Bible presents the child with a vivid and majestic picture he will never forget. The omissions made in the Sacred History are quite unintelligible, and only impair the character and beauty of the Scriptures. Why for instance is the statement omitted in all the Sacred Histories, that when there was nothing, the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters, and that after having created, God looked at His creation and saw that it was good, and that then it was the morning and evening of such and such a day? Why do they omit that God breathed into Adam's nostrils the breath of life, and that having taken one of his ribs He with the flesh closed up the place thereof, and so forth? One must read the Bible to unperverted children to understand how necessary and true it all is. Perhaps one ought not to give the Bible to perverted young ladies, but when reading it to peasant children I did not alter or omit a single word. None of them giggled behind another's back but all listened eagerly and with natural reverence. The story of Lot and his daughters, and the story of Judah's son, evoked horror but not laughter. . . .

How intelligible and clear it all is especially to a child, and yet how stern and serious! I cannot imagine what instruction would be possible without that book. Yet when one

has learnt these stories only in childhood and has afterwards partly forgotten them, one thinks: What good do they do us? Would it not be all the same if one did not know them at all? So it seems till on beginning to teach you test on other children the elements that helped to develop you. It seems as if one could teach children to write and read and calculate, and could give them an idea of history, geography, and natural phenomena, without the Bible and before the Bible; yet nowhere is this done: everywhere the child first of all gets to know the Bible, its stories, or extracts from it. The first relations of the learner to the teacher are founded on that book. Such a general fact is not an accident. My very free relations with my pupils at the commencement of the Yásno-Polyána school helped me to find the explanation of this phenomenon.

A child or a man on entering school (I make no distinction between a ten-, thirty-, or seventy-year-old man) brings with him the special view of things he has deduced from life and to which he is attached. That a man of any age should begin to learn, it is necessary that he should love learning. That he should love learning he must recognize the falseness and insufficiency of his own view of things and must scent from afar that new view of life which learning is to reveal to him. No man or boy would have the strength to learn, if the result of learning presented itself to him merely as a capacity to write, to read, and to reckon. No master could teach if he did not command an outlook on life higher than that of his pupils. That a pupil may surrender himself whole-heartedly to his teacher a corner must be lifted of the veil which hides from him the delight of the world of thought, knowledge, and poetry, to which learning will admit him. Only by being constantly under the spell of that bright light shining ahead of him, will the pupil be able to use his powers in the way we require of him.

What means have we of lifting this corner of the veil? . . . As I have said, I thought as many think, that being myself in the world to which I had to introduce my pupils, it would be easy for me to do this; and I taught the rudiments, explained natural phenomena, and told them as the primers do that the fruits of learning are sweet, but the scholars did not believe me and kept aloof. Then I tried reading the Bible to them and quite took possession of them. A corner of the veil was lifted, and they yielded themselves to me completely. They fell in love with the book, and with learning, and with me. It only remained for me to guide them on. . . .

To reveal to the pupil a new world and to make him without possessing knowledge love knowledge, there is no book but the Bible. I speak even for those who do not regard the Bible as a revelation. There are no other works—at least I know of none—which in so compressed and poetic a form contain all those sides of human thought which the Bible unites in itself. All the questions raised by natural phenomena are there dealt with. Of all the primitive relations of men with one another: the family, the State, and religion, we first become conscious through that book. The generalizations of thought and wisdom, with the charm given by their childlike simplicity of form, seize the pupil's mind for the first time. Not only does the lyricism of David's psalms act on the minds of the elder pupils, but more than that, from this book every one becomes conscious for the first time of the beauty of an epic story in its incomparable simplicity and strength. Who has not wept over the story of Joseph and his meeting with his brethren? Who has not with bated breath told the story of the bound and shorn Samson revenging himself on his enemies and perishing under the ruins of the palace he destroys, or received a hundred other impressions on which we were reared as on our mothers' milk?

Let those who deny the educative value of the Bible and say it is out of date, invent a book and stories explaining the phenomena of Nature, either from general history or from the imagination, which will be accepted as the Bible stories are and then we will admit that the Bible is obsolete. . . .

Drawn though it may be from a one-sided experience I repeat my conviction. The development of a child or a man in our society without the Bible is as inconceivable as that of an ancient Greek would have been without Homer. The Bible is the only book to begin with for a child's reading. Both in its form and in its contents the Bible should serve as a model for all children's primers and all reading books. A translation of the Bible into the language of the common folk would be the best book for the people.

When pupils came from other schools where they had to learn Scripture by heart or had been inoculated with the abbreviated school-primer versions, Tolstóy found that the Bible had nothing like as strong an effect on them as it had on boys who came fresh to it.

Such pupils do not experience what is felt by fresh pupils,

who listen to the Bible with beating heart, seizing every word, thinking that now, now at last, all the wisdom of the world is about to be revealed to them.

In reading the above passage it should be remembered that in Russian usage 'The Bible' means the Old Testament only.

Besides the Old Testament the only books the people understand and like, says Tolstóy, are those written not for the people but by the people; such as folk-tales and collections of songs, legends, proverbs, verses, and riddles. There was much in his experience which matches that of Cecil Sharp in his revival of English Folk Songs and Dances: namely, that there is an excellent literature and art which children and common folk appreciate and assimilate as eagerly and as well as any one, and which it is the height of folly to despise. His perception of the gap separating the art and literature accessible to the people from artificial art that is beyond their reach, led him subsequently to undertake, first a series of school primers, and then the re-telling of a number of folk-tales and legends (in *Twenty-three Tales*) which have reached more readers, and perhaps benefited the world more, than anything else he wrote.

With penmanship it happened at Yásno-Polyána school, as with reading:

The pupils wrote very badly and a new master introduced writing from copies (another exercise very sedate and easy for the master). The pupils became dull and we were obliged to abandon calligraphy, and did not know how to devise any way of improving their handwriting. The eldest class discovered a way for itself. Having finished writing the Bible stories the elder pupils began to ask for their exercise-books to take home [probably to read to their parents]. These were dirty, crumpled, and badly written. The precise mathematician P. asked for some paper and set to work to rewrite his stories. This idea pleased the others. 'Give me, too, some paper!'—'Give me an exercise-book!' and a fashion for calligraphy set in which still prevails in the upper class. They took an exercise-book, put before them a written alphabet-copy from which they imitated each letter, boasting to one

another of their performance, and in two weeks' time they had made great progress.

Grammar proved to be an unsatisfactory subject and to have hardly any connexion with correct writing or speaking.

In our youngest—the third—class they write what they like. Besides that, the youngest write out in the evening, one at a time, sentences they have all composed together. One writes, and the others whisper among themselves noting his mistakes and only waiting till he has finished to denounce his misplaced *e* or his wrongly detached prefix, or sometimes to perpetrate a blunder of their own. To write correctly and correct mistakes made by others, gives them great pleasure. The elder boys seize every letter they can get hold of, exercising themselves in the correction of mistakes and trying with all their might to write correctly, but they cannot bear grammar or the analysis of sentences and, in spite of a bias we had for analysis, they only tolerate it to a very limited extent, falling asleep or evading the classes.

History on the whole went badly, except such bits of Russian history as, when told poetically, aroused patriotic feelings. On one memorable occasion the whole class went wild with excitement and eager interest. That was when Tolstóy, exercising a poet's licence, told the story of the defeat of Napoleon's invasion of Russia in 1812.

Except in this legendary manner the teaching of history to children is, in Tolstoy's opinion, useless. The historic sense develops later than the artistic sense:

In my experience and practice the first germ of interest in history arises out of contemporary events, sometimes as a result of participation in them, through political interest, political opinions, debates, and the reading of newspapers. Consequently the idea of beginning to teach history from present times should suggest itself to every intelligent master.

Of geography as a subject for the education of children Tolstóy had an even lower opinion:

In Von Vizin's comedy *The Minor*, when Mitrofánushka was being persuaded to learn geography, his mother said:

'Why teach him all the countries? The coachman will drive him where he may have to go to.' Nothing more to the point has ever been said against geography, and all the learned men in the world put together cannot rebut such an irrefragable argument. I am speaking quite seriously. What need was there for me to know where the river and town of Barcelona are situated, when for thirty-three years I have not once had occasion to use that knowledge? Not even the most picturesque description of Barcelona and its inhabitants could, I imagine, conduce to the development of my mental faculties.

In fact the sweeping conclusion at which Tolstóy arrives is that:

I not only see no use but I see great harm in teaching history or geography before the University is reached.

And he leaves it an open question whether even the University should concern itself with such subjects.

Drawing was a favourite lesson with the boys, but I must confine myself to a single extract on that subject:

We drew figures from the blackboard in the following way: I first drew a horizontal or a vertical line, dividing it into parts by dots, and the pupils copied this line. Then I drew another, or several, perpendicular or sloping lines standing in a certain relation to the first, and similarly divided up. Then we joined the dots of these different lines by others (straight or curved), and formed some symmetrical figure which as it was gradually evolved was copied by the boys. It seemed to me that this was a good plan: first, because the boy clearly saw the whole process of the formation of the figure, and secondly, because his perception of the co-relation of lines was developed by this drawing from the board much better than by copying drawings or designs. . . .

It is nearly always useless to hang up a large complete picture or figure, because a beginner is quite at a loss before it, as he would be before an object from nature. But the growth of the figure before his eyes has an important meaning. In this case the pupil sees the backbone and skeleton of the drawing on which the body is subsequently found. The pupils were always called on to criticize the lines and their relation as I drew them. I often purposely drew them wrong to find out in how far their judgment of the co-relation and incorrectness of the lines had been developed. Then again

when I was drawing my figure I asked the boys where they thought the next line should be added, and I even made one or other of them invent the shape of the figure himself.

In this way I not only aroused a more lively interest, but got the boys to participate freely in the formation and development of the figures, and this prevented the question, Why? which boys so naturally put when they are set to draw from copies.

The ease or difficulty with which it was understood and the more or less interest evoked, chiefly influenced the choice of the method of instruction; and I often quite abandoned what I had prepared for the lesson, merely because it was dull or seemed alien to the boys.

In the singing class, Tolstóy very soon found that notes written on the staff were not easily grasped by the pupils, and after using the staff for some ten lessons he once showed the boys the use of numbers instead, and from that day forward they always asked him to use numbers, and they themselves always used numbers in writing music. This method is much more convenient, Tolstóy considers, for explaining both the intervals and the changes of key. The pupils who were not musical soon dropped out of the class, and the lessons with those who were, sometimes went on for three or four hours at a stretch. He tried to teach them musical time in the usual manner, but succeeded so badly that he had to take that and melody separately. First he took the sounds without reference to time, and then beat the time without considering the sounds, and finally joined the two processes together. After several lessons he found that the method he had drifted into combined the chief features (though not some of the minor peculiarities) of Chevet's method, which he had seen in successful operation, among classes of workmen, in Paris. After a very few lessons two of the boys used to write down the melodies of the songs they knew and were almost able to read music at sight.

From the limited experience he had in teaching music, Tolstóy—to quote his own words almost textually—became convinced that: (1) to write sounds by means of

numerals is the most profitable method; (2) to teach rhythm separately from pitch is the most profitable method; (3) in order that instruction in music may be willingly and fruitfully received, one must from the start teach the *art*, and not aim merely at dexterity in singing or playing. Spoilt young ladies may be taught to play Burgmüller's exercises, but it is better not to teach the children of the people at all than to teach them mechanically; (4) nothing so harms musical instruction as what looks like a knowledge of music: namely, the performances of choirs, and performances at examinations, speech-days, or in church; and (5) in teaching music to the people the thing to be aimed at is to impart our knowledge of the general laws of music, but not the false taste that has been developed among us.

In one of the most remarkable of his articles Tolstóy tells how he discovered that Fédka and Sëmka possessed literary ability of a high order. Composition lessons had not gone well, until one day Tolstóy proposed that the children should write a story of peasant life to illustrate a popular proverb. Most of the boys felt this to be beyond their powers and went on with their other occupations. One of them however bade Tolstóy write it himself in competition with them, and he set to work to do so till Fédka, climbing on the back of his chair interrupted him by reading over his shoulder. Tolstóy then began reading out what he had composed, and explained how he thought of continuing the story. Several of the boys became interested, not approving of Tolstóy's work but criticizing and amending it, offering suggestions and supplying details. Sëmka and Fédka particularly distinguished themselves, and showed extraordinary imagination and such judgment, sense of proportion, restraint, and power of clothing their thoughts in words, that Tolstóy was carried away by the interest of the work and wrote as hard as he could to their dictation, having constantly to ask them to wait and not forget the details they had suggested. Fédka (of whom Tolstóy says that, 'The chief quality in every art, the sense of

proportion, was extraordinarily developed in him: he writhed at every superfluous detail suggested by any of the other boys'), gradually took control of the work, and ruled so despotically, and with such evident right, that the others dropped off and went home, except Sēmka, who continued to co-operate along his own more matter-of-fact line.

We worked from seven in the evening till eleven. They felt neither hunger nor weariness, and were even angry with me when I stopped writing; and they set to work to do it themselves turn and turn about, but did not get on well and soon gave it up. . . .

I left the lesson because I was too excited.

'What is the matter with you? Why are you so pale: are you ill?' asked my colleague. Indeed only two or three times in my life have I experienced such strong emotion as that evening. . . .

Next day Tolstóy could hardly believe the experience of the night before. It seemed incredible that a peasant boy hardly able to read, should suddenly display such marvellous command of artistic, creative power.

It seemed to me strange and offensive that I, the author of *Childhood*, who had achieved a certain success and was recognized by the educated Russian public as possessing artistic talent, should in artistic matters not merely be unable to instruct or help eleven-year-old Sēmka and Fédka, but should hardly be able except at a happy moment of excitement to keep up with them and understand them.

Next day we set to work to continue the story. When I asked Fédka if he had thought of a continuation, he only waved his hand and remarked: 'I know, I know! . . . Who will do the writing?' . . . We resumed the work and again the boys showed the same enthusiasm and the same sense of artistic truth and proportion.

Half-way through the lesson I had to leave them. They wrote two pages without me, as correct in feeling and as true to life as the preceding ones. These two pages were rather poorer in detail, some of the details were not quite happily placed, and there were also a couple of repetitions. All this had evidently occurred because the actual writing was a difficulty to them. On the third day we had similar success. . . .

There could no longer be any doubt or thought of its being a mere accident. We had obviously succeeded in finding a more natural and inspiring method than any we had previously tried.

This unfinished story was accidentally destroyed. Tolstóy was greatly annoyed, and Fédka and Sëmka, though they did not understand his vexation, offered to stay the night at his house and reproduce it. After eight o'clock, when school was over, they came and (to Tolstóy's great pleasure) locked themselves into his study, where at first they were heard laughing but then became very quiet. On listening at the door Tolstóy heard their subdued voices discussing the story and heard also the scratching of a pen. At midnight he knocked and was admitted. Sëmka was standing at the large table writing busily, his lines running crookedly across the paper and his pen constantly seeking the inkstand. Fédka told Tolstóy to 'wait a bit', and insisted on Sëmka's adding something more at his dictation. At last Tolstóy took the exercise-book, and the lads, after enjoying a merry supper of potatoes and *kvás*, divested themselves of their sheepskin coats and lay down to sleep under the writing table; their 'charming, healthy, childish, peasant laughter' still ringing through the room.

The story just mentioned, and others written by the children, were published in the magazine; and Tolstóy declares them to be, in their way, equal to anything in Russian literature. One of these written in school by Fédka and entitled *A Soldier's Wife*, can be read in *Russian Tales* (Collins's 'King's Way' series) as also another story, *Just for a Word*, written by him in later life. Readers can therefore judge of their literary quality for themselves. It was largely on the model of these peasant children's stories that, years later, Tolstóy wrote his own famous *Twenty-three Tales*.

The rules for encouraging composition that he deduced from his experience are these:

(1) To offer as large and varied a choice of themes as possible; not inventing them specially for children, but offer-

ing such as most interest the teacher and seem to him most important.

(2) To give children stories written by children to read, and to offer only children's compositions as models, because these are juster, finer, and more moral, than those written by adults.

(3) (Specially important.) Never when looking through the compositions make any remarks to the children about the neatness of the exercise-books, the handwriting, the spelling, or, above all, about the construction of the sentences or about logic.

(4) Since the difficulty of composition lies not in size, nor in subject, nor in correctness of language, but in the mechanism of the work which consists: (*a*) in choosing one out of the great number of thoughts and images that offer themselves; (*b*) in choosing words in which to clothe it; (*c*) in remembering it and finding a fitting place for it; (*d*) in remembering what has already been written, so as not to repeat anything or omit anything, and in finding a way of joining up what has preceded to what succeeds; (*e*) and finally in so managing that while thinking and writing at one and the same time, the one operation shall not hamper the other—I, having these things in view, proceeded as follows.

At first I took upon myself some of these sides of the work, transferring them gradually to the pupils. At first out of the thoughts and images suggested I chose for them those which seemed to me best, and kept these in mind and indicated suitable places to insert them, and looked over what had been written to avoid repetitions, and I did the writing myself, letting them merely clothe the thoughts and images in words. Afterwards I let them select, and then let them revise what had been written, and finally they took on themselves the actual writing. . . .

One of the profoundest convictions Tolstóy drew from his educational experiments was that the peasants and their children have much artistic capacity, and another was the immense importance of art, shown by its humanizing effect upon them. Most of the works: literary, poetic, dramatic, pictorial, and plastic, now produced, are specially produced for people possessed of leisure, wealth, and an artificial training, and are therefore useless to the people. This deflection of art from the

service of the millions to the delectation of the thousands, seemed to him a great evil.

He says with reference to two realms of art, music, and poetry, which he had loved passionately and with which he was very familiar, that he noticed that the demands of the masses were more legitimate than those of the classes.

Terrible to say, I came to the conviction that all that we have done in those two departments has been done along a false and exceptional path which lacks importance, has no future, and is insignificant in comparison with the demands upon and even with the samples of those same arts which we find put forward by the people. I became convinced that such lyrical compositions as, for example, Púshkin's 'I Remember the Marvellous Moment', and such musical productions as Beethoven's Last Symphony, are not so absolutely and universally good as the song 'Willy the Steward' or the melody of 'Floating down the river, Mother Vólga'; and that Púshkin and Beethoven please us, not because they are absolutely beautiful but because we are as spoiled as they, and because they flatter our abnormal irritability and weakness. How common it is to hear the empty and stale paradox that to understand the beautiful preparation is necessary! Who said so? Why? What proves it? It is only a shift, a loophole to escape from the hopeless position to which the false direction of our art, produced for one class alone, had led us. Why are the beauty of the sun and of the human face, and the beauty of the sounds of a folk-song, and of deeds of love and self-sacrifice, accessible to every one, and why do *they* demand no preparation?

For years I vainly strove to make my pupils feel the poetic beauties of Púshkin and of our whole literature, and a similar attempt is being made by innumerable teachers not in Russia alone, and if they will observe the results of their efforts and be frank about the matter, they will admit that the chief result of this attempt to develop poetic feeling is to kill it, and that it is just those pupils whose natures are most poetic who show most aversion to such commentaries. . . .

I will try to sum up all that I have said above. In reply to the question: Do people need the *beaux arts*? pedagogues usually grow timid and confused (only Plato decided the matter boldly in the negative). They say: 'Art is needed, but

with certain limitations, and to make it possible for all to become artists would be bad for the social structure. Certain arts and certain degrees of art can only exist in a certain class of society. The arts must have their special servants entirely devoted to them.' They say: 'It should be possible for the greatly gifted to escape from among the people and devote themselves entirely to the service of art.' That is the greatest concession pedagogy makes to the right of every individual to become what he wants to be.

But I consider this to be all wrong. I think the need to enjoy art and serve art is inherent in every human being to whatever race or class he belongs, and that this need has its right and should be satisfied. Taking that position as an axiom, I say that if the enjoyment and production of art by every one presents inconveniences and inconsistencies, the reason lies in the character and direction art has taken: about which we must be on our guard lest we foist anything false on the rising generation and lest we prevent it from producing something new both in form and in matter.

Tolstóy goes so far as to doubt whether so long as no suitable literature is produced for the people, it is even worth their while to learn to read.

Looking closer at the results of the rudiments in the form in which they are supplied to the masses, I think most people will decide that the rudiments do more harm than good, taking into account the prolonged compulsion, the disproportionate development of memory, the false conception of the completeness of science, the aversion to further education, the false vanity, and the habit of senseless reading, acquired in these schools. . . .

'Let us print good books for the people!' . . . How simple and easy that seems—like all great thoughts! There is only one obstacle, namely that there exist no good books for the people either here or in Europe. To print such books they must first be produced, and none of our philanthropists think of undertaking *that* work!

Before closing this rapid summary of Tolstóy's educational writings let me quote a few more sentences which sum up his essential position:

In my articles on Education I have given the oretic reasons for considering that only the freedom of the pupils to choose what they will learn and how they will learn it can furnish a sound

basis for any instruction. In practice I constantly applied those rules in the schools under my guidance . . . and the results were always very good both for the teachers and the pupils, as well as for the evolution of new methods; and this I assert boldly, for hundreds of visitors came to the Yásno-Polyána school and know how it worked.

For the masters the result of such relations with the pupils was that they did not consider any methods they happened to know to be the best, but tried to discover new methods and made acquaintance with other teachers whose ways they could learn. They tested fresh methods and above all were themselves always learning. In cases of failure a master never allowed himself to think it was the pupils' fault—their laziness, naughtiness, stupidity, deafness, or stuttering, but was convinced that the fault was his own, and for every defect in the pupil or pupils he tried to discover a remedy.

For the pupils the results were that they learnt eagerly, always begged to have additional lessons on winter evenings, and were quite free in class—which in my conviction and experience is the chief condition of successful teaching. Between the teachers and the pupils friendly and natural relations always arose, without which it is not possible for a teacher to know his pupils fully. . . .

With reference to the methods of instruction, the results were that no method was adopted or rejected because it pleased or did not please the teacher, but only because the pupil without compulsion accepted, or did not accept it. But besides the good results that unfailingly followed the adoption of my method, both by myself and by all—more than twenty—other teachers (I say 'unfailingly' because we never had a single pupil who did not master the rudiments)—besides these results, the adoption of the principles mentioned produced this effect, that during fifteen years all the different modifications to which my method has been subjected have not only not removed it from the demands of the people but have brought it closer and closer to them. . . . In my school . . . every teacher while bringing his pupils forward, himself feels the need of learning, and this was constantly the case with all the teachers I had.

Moreover the very methods of instruction themselves—since they are not fixed once for all, but aim at finding the easiest and simplest paths—change and improve in accord with what the teacher learns from the pupils' attitude towards his teaching.

The children had nothing to pay for attending the school at Yásnaya Polyána, and the relations between them and Tolstóy are illustrated by the account a visitor has given of seeing Tolstóy rush through a gate followed by a crowd of merry youngsters snowballing him. Tolstóy was intent on making his escape, but on seeing the visitor he changed his mind, acknowledged his defeat, and surrendered to his triumphant pursuers.

Long after leaving school Fédka wrote his recollections of it. He says:

One day, soon after the school was started, Leo Nikoláevich said to us: 'Do not call me "Your Excellence". My name is Leo Nikoláevich—call me so.' Before three months had passed learning was all the rage with us. In three months we were already able to read easily. . . .

The flaming eagerness shown by Leo Nikoláevich heartened us and our spirits rose day by day. In the school interval we were given tea and some lunch. Then there were games and amusements.

'You want to have something to eat and to go out a little?' asked he. 'So do I. Well, which of us will get out quickest?'

With shouts and squeals we rushed down the stairs after him. He sprang three or four steps at a time, escaping from us. We followed in a bunch.

He describes how Tolstóy soon returned after lunch and would join in the snowballing and let them try to upset him. He says:

We would surround Leo Nikoláevich, catch hold of him before and behind, try to trip him up, snowball him, and rush in and climb on his back, eager to overthrow him. But he was even more determined than we, and like a strong ox would carry us on his back. After a while from weariness, or more often for fun, he would fall into the snow. Then our ecstasy was indescribable! We at once began to cover him with snow and threw ourselves on him in a heap, crying: 'The heap's too small! The heap's too small!'

So the hours passed like minutes. If one lived in such merriment one would not notice the passing of an age.

We enjoyed school and worked eagerly. But Leo Nikoláevich worked yet more eagerly than we. He worked with us so eagerly that he often missed his lunch. In school his appear-

ance was serious. He demanded of us cleanliness, care with the school things, and truthfulness. . . .

He never punished any one for pranks, disobedience, or idleness; and if we became too noisy he only said: 'Quieter, please!'

We kept exemplary order all three years.

. . . In such pleasures and merriment, and with rapid progress in learning, we grew as close to Leo Nikoláevich as a cobbler's thread is to wax. We were sad without him and he without us. We were inseparable from him and only the night-time divided us. We spent the day in school and passed the evening at games, sitting on his balcony till late at night. He would tell us tales about the war, or of how a man-cook cut his aunt's throat in Moscow, and how he went hunting and a bear bit him, and he showed us the scar near his eye. There was no end to our talking. We told him terrible things—about wizards, and wood-demons. . . . He told us tales, terrible or funny, sang songs, suiting the words to us. . . . He was in general a great jester and never missed a chance to have a laugh. . . .

Fifty years have passed since then. I am already an old man. But my recollections of Leo Nikoláevich's school and of himself are still clear. They always cheer me, especially when I am in trouble. . . . The love of Leo Nikoláevich then kindled burns brightly in my soul and lights my whole life; and the recollection of those bright and happy days I have never lost, and never shall lose.

Teachers from his own and the neighbouring schools, as well as other pupils of Yásnaya school, fully confirm Fédka's remarks, and Tolstóy himself, both at that time and long afterwards, gave a like impression.

Writing to the Countess A. A. Tolstóy, in July 1861, he said:

It is impossible to describe what children they are—one must see them. Among those of our own sweet class I have never met anything like them. Just think, that during two years, and with a complete absence of discipline, not a single boy or girl has been punished, and there is never any idleness, rudeness, any silly tricks or improper words.

And in 1903 he wrote to Birukóv:

I owe the brightest time in my life not to the love of

woman but to love of people, to the love of children. That was a wonderful time, especially after the gloom that had preceded it.

Apart from articles on education Tolstóy wrote little during the three years from the autumn of 1859, when he began his school work, to September 1862 when he married.

He does not stand before the world to-day primarily as a schoolmaster, and even if I were competent to deal with the subject it would exceed the limits of this biography to attempt a criticism of his precepts and practice, but he certainly possessed, as he claims in one of his articles, 'a certain pedagogic tact', and is right in his belief that rigid discipline in schools, lack of freedom and initiative, continual demand for silence and obedience, and refusal to allow pupils to criticize the lessons they receive, have a stupefying effect.

All that he allowed at Yásnaya Polyána was denied to us when I was at Christ's Hospital in 1868-74; and I look back on those six years of mental stultification as the most wretched of my life. At the preparatory school in Hertford, so stupefied were the little boys by terror and discipline that when the head master (traditionally an incarnation of all the virtues) became grossly harsh and unfair, they could not see what was happening until his insanity was so pronounced that the doctors had to take him in hand, an event that occurred soon after I left for the upper school in London.

There one of the masters (who evidently did not believe that 'history is experience teaching by example') in intervals between whacking the boys on their backs or hands with a long cane, used, I remember, emphatically to announce that 'dates and names are the most important parts of history'. A Latin master, a barrister, who was usually busy at some law work when he should have been teaching us, used to set us to learn by rote rules and illustrations which we did not in the least understand. On one occasion the example given in the grammar was:

'Opes irritamenta malorum effodiuntur.

Riches the incentives of crime are dug out of the earth."

The top boy had learnt the rule and illustration by heart (which I never could do); but departing from his usual routine the master unexpectedly asked which Latin word corresponded to which English. Each of the first twenty-four boys in the class in turn got caned and sent to the bottom, so that by the time I, who had been last, had come to the top and it was my turn to reply, only one possible combination remained untried and I was able to announce that *effodiuntur* meant 'are dug out of the earth'. Unluckily there was another rule that day, and over this I, in turn, came to grief and was caned and sent to the bottom.

In the drawing class I remember doing the outline of a cube to the master's satisfaction and being promoted to the shading class. I had no idea how to shade and the attempt I made was no doubt a very bad one, but instead of receiving advice or assistance my ears were boxed so violently that I should be inclined to attribute to that assault the slight deafness from which I have since suffered, were it not that such treatment was so common at Christ's Hospital that none of the victims whose hearing was impaired could be sure to which of the masters they owed that part of their preparation for the battle of life.

I feel sure the stultifying effects of such cruel and senseless treatment would have been even more serious had not the school authorities, by some strange oversight, allowed *one* really readable and interesting periodical to find a place among the Sunday magazines and other sterilized literature obtainable in the School Library. This one publication, which I read ardently during my school years, was *Chambers's Journal*. It contained novels by James Payn, and other matter suited to my powers of mental digestion. From smuggled copies of Captain Marryat's novels I also got a good deal of culture, far more I am sure than from any of the lessons we endured.

CHAPTER IX

MARRIAGE

To one who admires Tolstóy's educational work it is disconcerting to see how slightly he spoke of it sixteen years later in his *Confession*. But that was always his way: the old is useless and worthless and bad; only the new, the unachieved, the fresh ideal, is admirable. For it he decries all that the past has produced—including himself and his former work. He makes his points keenly and powerfully, but to understand him we must discriminate and allow for an artistic temperament tempting him to exaggeration. Let him however speak for himself, that the reader may judge:

On returning from abroad I settled in the country and chanced to occupy myself with peasant schools. This work was particularly to my taste, because in it I had not to face the falsity which had become obvious to me and stared me in the face when I tried to teach people by literary means. Here also I acted in the name of Progress, but I already regarded Progress itself critically. I said to myself: 'In some of its developments Progress has proceeded wrongly; and with primitive peasant children one must deal in a spirit of perfect freedom, letting them choose what path of progress they please.' In reality I was ever revolving round one and the same insoluble problem, which was: How to teach without knowing what to teach? In the higher spheres of literary activity I had realized that one could not teach without knowing what; for I saw that people all taught differently, and by quarrelling among themselves succeeded only in hiding their ignorance from one another. But here, with peasant children, I thought to evade this difficulty by letting them learn what they liked. It amuses me now when I remember how I shuffled, trying to satisfy my desire to teach while in the depth of my soul I knew very well that I could not teach anything needful for I did not know what was needful.

After spending a year at school work I went abroad a second time to discover how to teach others while myself knowing nothing.

And it seemed to me that I had learnt this abroad, and in the year of the peasants' Emancipation I returned to Russia armed with all this wisdom; and having become an Arbiter, I began to teach both the uneducated peasants in schools and the educated classes through a magazine I published. Things appeared to be going well, but I felt I was not quite sound mentally and that matters could not long continue in that way. And I should perhaps then have come to the state of despair at which I arrived fifteen years later had there not been one side of life still unexplored by me and promising me happiness: that was marriage.

For a year I busied myself with arbitration work, the schools, and the magazine; and I became so worn-out—as a result especially of my mental confusion—and so hard was my struggle as Arbiter, so obscure the results of my activity in the schools, so repulsive my shuffling in the magazine (which always amounted to one and the same thing: a desire to teach everybody and to hide the fact that I did not know what to teach), that I fell ill, mentally rather than physically, threw up everything, and went away to the Bashkirs in the steppes, to breathe fresh air, drink *kumys*, and live an animal life.

Tired of and dissatisfied with his work, and thinking he detected in himself signs of consumption, which had carried off two of his brothers, he set off in May 1862 (accompanied by his servant Alexéy and two of his pupils) to undergo a *kumys* (soured and fermented mares' milk) cure in the Samára steppes east of the Vólga.

He went first to Moscow, and his friend Raévski has told how Tolstóy came up to him in the Club there and mentioned with great indignation and vexation that his brother was playing cards and had lost 7,000 rubles in a few hours. 'How can men do such things?' said Tolstóy. Half an hour later Raévski saw Leo Tolstóy himself playing Chinese billiards (a game something like bagatelle, played on a board with wire impediments) and learnt that he had lost 1,000 rubles to the stranger with whom he was playing! This was, I believe, the last occasion on which Tolstóy played any game for stakes he found it difficult to pay. The episode led to the premature publication of his novel, *The Cossacks*, which had been in hand for several years but to which he still

intended to add a second part. Not having 1,000 rubles available, he let Katkóv, the well-known publicist and editor of the *Moscow Vedomosti* and of the monthly *Russian Messenger*, have the story for that sum paid in advance. The novel is based on Tolstóy's Caucasian experiences. The circumstances which led to its publication made it repugnant to him, and he never completed it.

He mentioned the occurrence at the Behrs, and the young ladies of that family were already so interested in him that they wept at the news. At their home he was always a welcome and intimate guest.

From Moscow he proceeded to Tver by rail, and thence by steamer down the Vólga to Samára. From Samára he wrote to Aunt Tatiána:

27th May 1862.

To-day I shall start to drive ninety miles from Samára to Karalýk. . . .

I have had a beautiful journey; the country pleases me very much; my health is better, i.e. I cough less. Alexéy and the boys are alive and well, as you may tell their relations. Please write to me about Sergéy, or let him do so. Greet all my dear comrades [the masters of the schools] for me, and ask them to write to me of what goes on and of how they are getting on. . . .

In another letter, of 28th June 1862, he wrote:

It is now a month since I had any news of you or from home; please write to me about everybody: first, our family; secondly, the students [who acted as masters in the schools], etc. Alexéy and I have grown fatter, he especially, but we still cough a little, and again he especially. We are living in a Tartar tent; the weather is beautiful. I have found my friend Stolýpin—now Atamán in Urálsk—and have driven over to see him; and have brought back from there a secretary; but I dictate and write little. Idleness overcomes one when drinking *kumýs*. In two weeks' time I intend to leave here, and I expect to be home by St. Elijah's day [20 July, o.s.]. I am tormented in this out-of-the-way place by not knowing what is going on, and also by the thought that I am horribly behind-hand with publication of the magazine. I kiss your hand. . . .

Just when Tolstóy was leaving Karalýk an unexpected thing happened at Yásnaya, where his sister Márya was

staying with Aunt Tatiána. Owing to the denunciation of a police spy who, among other lies, pretended to have discovered a secret door in Tolstóy's house, the police authorities decided to search his estate; and one morning—to the immense astonishment of the neighbouring peasants—police, watchmen, officials, and gendarmes under the command of a colonel, appeared upon the scene. In the school-house a photographic apparatus was found: a thing sufficiently rare in a Russian village in those days to evoke the suspicious inquiries of the gendarme officer, to whom one of the student-teachers chaffingly volunteered the information that it was kept to photograph Herzen (the political exile, then living in London); but nowhere were any secret doors found.

The floors of the stables were broken up with crowbars to see if anything were hidden there. The pond was dragged, but nothing more incriminating than crayfish and carp was found. All the cupboards, drawers, boxes, and desks in the house were opened and searched, and the ladies were frightened almost to death. A police-officer would not allow Tolstóy's sister to leave the library till he had finished reading aloud in her presence and in that of two gendarmes, Tolstóy's Diary and letters, which contained the most intimate secrets of his life and which he had kept private since he was sixteen years old.

Finding nothing incriminating at Yásnaya, the representatives of law and order betook themselves to the other schools working in conjunction with Tolstóy, and there turned tables and cupboards upside down, seized exercise-books and primers, arrested the teachers, and spread the wildest suspicions abroad among the peasants, to whom school education was still a novelty held somewhat in suspicion.

On receiving news of this event Tolstóy at once wrote to his aunt, the Countess A. A. Tolstóy, asking her to speak to those who knew him well and had influence, and on whose aid he could rely. Said he:

I cannot and will not let this affair pass. All the activity

in which I found solace and happiness has been spoilt. Auntie is so ill from fright that she will probably not recover. The peasants no longer regard me as an honest man—an opinion I had earned in the course of years—but as a criminal, an incendiary, or a coiner, whose cunning alone has enabled him to escape punishment.

‘Eh, man, you’ve been found out! Don’t talk to us about honesty and justice any more—you’ve hardly escaped handcuffs yourself!’

From the landed proprietors I need not say what a cry of rapture has gone up. Please write to me as soon as possible, after consulting Peróvsky [Count V. A. P.] and Alexéy Tolstóy [Count A. T., the dramatist and poet] and any one else you like, as to how I should write to the Emperor and how best to present my letter. It is too late to prevent the injury the thing has done or to extricate myself, and there is no way out except by receiving satisfaction as public as the insult has been; and this I have firmly resolved on. I shall not join Herzen; he has his way I have mine. Neither will I hide. . . . But I will loudly announce that I am selling my estate and mean to leave Russia, where one cannot know from moment to moment what awaits one. . . .

At the end of an eight-page letter he mentions that the colonel of gendarmes, on leaving, threatened to renew his search till he discovered ‘if anything is hidden’; and Tolstóy adds, ‘I have loaded pistols in my room and am waiting to see how this matter will end’.

He also remarks:

I often say to myself, How exceedingly fortunate it was that I was not at home at the time! Had I been there, I should certainly now be awaiting my trial for murder!

Soon after this Alexander II spent some time in and near Moscow. There Tolstóy presented a letter claiming reparation, which an aide-de-camp undertook to give to the Emperor; and some weeks later the Governor of Túla transmitted to Tolstóy the Emperor’s expression of regret for what had occurred.

It is easy to imagine the effect such an outrage as this police-search had on a man of Tolstóy’s acute self-esteem, and how it intensified his hatred of Government.

After his return from Samára he saw more of the Behrs than ever. Fet, whom he introduced to them, thus records his impressions of the family:

I found the doctor an amiable old gentleman of polite manners, and his wife a handsome, stately brunette who evidently ruled the house. I refrain from describing the three young ladies, of whom the youngest had an admirable contralto voice. They all, notwithstanding the watchful supervision of their mother and their irreproachable modesty, possessed that attractive quality which the French designate by the words *du chien* [lively, full of go]. The service and the dinner were admirable.

Madame Behrs was on very friendly terms with Tolstóy's sister, the Countess Márya, and before he went abroad Tolstóy had frequently at the house of the latter played with the children of both families. In 1862 he constantly visited the Behrs at Pokróvksi, where they lived in a *dácha* (country house) which they occupied every summer. He nearly always walked the eight miles from Moscow, and often took long rambles with the family besides. The girls had been educated at home, but Sónya and her eldest sister, Lisa, had passed a university examination entitling them to diplomas as qualified private teachers.

The third daughter, Tánya, was a lively, attractive girl of sixteen, with a beautiful and well-trained voice.

At the beginning of August 1862, Mme Behrs and her daughters paid a two weeks' visit to her father's estate of Ívitsa, some thirty miles from Yásnaya, and *en route* spent a couple of days at Yásnaya to visit the Countess Márya. The day after their arrival a picnic party was arranged with some neighbours. It was haymaking time, and there was much haystack climbing by the picnickers. The general impression was that Tolstóy was in love with Lisa, the eldest Miss Behrs—this opinion being fostered by the idea, then common in Russia, that an elder daughter should be disposed of before a younger was courted.

A few days later Tolstóy followed the Behrs to Ívitsa

and here the scene occurred which he has utilized in *Anna Karénina* when describing Lévin's proposal to Kitty—a scene in which something approaching thought-reading takes place.

Sitting at a card-table with Miss Sónya Behrs, Tolstóy wrote the initial letters of the sentence:

'In your family a false opinion exists about me and your sister Lisa; you and Tánichka should destroy it.'

Sónya looked at the letters and gave the words they stood for.

Tánya, who had hidden in the card-room to avoid being asked to sing, was an involuntary witness of this scene, and from her we learn that Tolstóy helped Sónya with a few of the words, but even so the test was a severe one.

Tolstóy then wrote the initial letters of another sentence:

'Your youth and need of happiness to-day remind me too strongly of my age and the impossibility of happiness,' and again she guessed right. The two understood one another, and their fate was then wellnigh sealed, though not finally decided for some weeks.

The Behrs returned to Pokróvski in September. Tolstóy accompanied them on the carriage-journey to Moscow and visited them every day, bringing music for the young ladies, playing the piano for them, accompanying Tánya's singing, and nick-naming her 'Madame Viardot' after the famous singer.

We may judge of his state of mind at this time by an entry in his Diary, dated 23rd August: 'I am afraid of myself. What if this be only a *desire* for love and not real love? I try to notice only her weak points, but yet I love.'

On 26th August Sónya gave him a story to read, written by herself. The entry in his Diary runs:

Went on foot to the Behrs; it is peacefully comfortable there—the girls' laughter. Sónya was vulgar and not good, but fills my mind. She gave me her story to read. What energy of truth and simplicity! The indefiniteness torments

her. I read it all without heart-sinking, jealousy, or envy; but 'unusually unattractive appearance' and 'instability of conviction' hit me hard. I have calmed down. All this [love, marriage, family life, &c.] is not my affair. . . . Work, and just the satisfaction of one's needs.

It may be mentioned that in his youth Tolstóy's appearance had always troubled him.

He was convinced that he was repulsively ugly [Tánya writes in her memoirs]. I have repeatedly heard him say so. He of course did not know that what was attractive in his appearance was the spiritual strength shown by his profound look. He could not see and observe in himself the expression of his eyes and that was what gave charm to his face.

Of the novel Sónya had written, Tánya tells us that it described the state of her soul, tormented by Tolstóy's indefinite relations towards her sister Lisa and herself. In the story Tolstóy appeared under the name of Dublíski. Tánya adds:

It is a pity my sister burnt her novel, for in it in embryo appeared the Rostóv family [subsequently depicted in *War and Peace*]: the mother, Véra and Natásha.

So that the future Countess Tolstóy had some share in suggesting her husband's great novel.

On his thirty-fourth birthday, 28th August 1862 (old style), he jotted down in his Diary the words: 'Ugly mug! Do not think of marriage; your calling is of another kind, and for that much has been given you.'

. On 3rd September:

Never has my future life with a wife presented itself to me so clearly, joyfully, and calmly. . . . Above all it seems so simple and timely, with no passions, fear, or a single moment of regret.

His Diary shows however the state of agitation and vacillation he was in. On 7th September he notes:

To-day I am at home alone and reflect at leisure on my own position. Dublíski, don't intrude where youth, poetry, beauty and love are! . . . For that, young men are in place.

The next day he exhorts himself:

Nonsense. A monastery of labour, that is your job, from the height of which you may calmly and gladly watch the love and happiness of others. I have dwelt in that monastery and will return to it. Yes.

The Diary is insincere. *Arrière-pensée*. That she is with me and will sit beside me and read . . . and this is for her.

12th September:

I am in love as I did not believe it possible to love. I am a madman and shall shoot myself if it goes on like this. I spent the evening at their house. She was charming in every way. But I am the repulsive Dublitski. I should have been on guard sooner. But now I cannot stop. Granted that I am a Dublitski, I am made beautiful by love. Yes, to-morrow I will go to them in the morning. There were some moments, but I did not avail myself of them. I was afraid, but I should have spoken simply. I should like to go back and speak out before them all. Lord, help me!

13th September:

Every day I think that it is impossible to suffer more and be happy at the same time, and every day I become more insane. Again I left with depression, repentance, and happiness, in my soul. To-morrow I will go as soon as I am up and say everything, or will shoot myself.

It was however not till the 16th that he handed her a letter containing a proposal of marriage. Tánya in her memoirs tells the story as follows:

Leo Tolstóy came to us on the 16th after dinner. I noticed that he was not his usual self. Something agitated him, now he sat down at the piano but got up again without finishing what he had begun to play, now walked about the room, going to Sónya and asking her to play a duet, and when she sat down to the piano saying: 'Better let us just sit here.'

So they sat at the piano and Sónya gently played over the valse *Il Baccio*, learning to play it as accompaniment to the song.

I saw and felt that something important had to happen that day, but I was not sure whether it would finish with his departure or a proposal.

I was going past the room, when Sónya called to me:

‘Tánya, try to sing the valse. I think I have learnt the accompaniment.’

It seemed to me that Tolstóy’s restlessness had conveyed itself to Sónya and oppressed her.

I agreed to sing the valse and took my place as usual in the middle of the room.

Sónya played the accompaniment with an unsteady hand. Tolstóy was sitting beside her. It seemed to me that he was discontented at her having got me to sing. I noticed this by the unpleasant expression on his face.

I was in good voice and, paying no attention to his mood, continued to sing, carried away by the graceful air of the valse.

Sónya blundered. Tolstóy slipped quietly into her seat and continuing the accompaniment at once gave life to my voice and to the words of the valse.

I no longer noticed anything, either the expression of his face or my sister’s confusion. I yielded completely to the charm of those sounds and reaching the finale, where appeal and forgiveness are so passionately expressed, I resolutely took the high note with which the valse ends.

‘How you sing to-day!’ Tolstoy said in an agitated voice.

I was pleased by his praise. I had dispelled his dissatisfaction, though I had not tried to do so.

A musical mood does not come to order, but especially in singing comes when you give a fragment of your soul.

Later on I learnt that while accompanying me that evening Tolstóy was trying his fate: ‘If she takes the final high note well, I must deliver the letter to-day (he had more than once brought with him a letter addressed to my sister). If she takes it badly I must not deliver it.’

In general Tolstóy had a habit of questioning fate by a game of ‘Patience’, or by various trifles: ‘Shall I do so?’ or, ‘Will that happen?’

I went away to make tea.

A little later I saw Sónya go quickly downstairs to our room with a letter in her hand.

Tolstóy’s proposal was readily accepted; but her father, displeased that the second daughter should be preferred to the eldest, at first refused his assent, though eventually he yielded to Sónya’s insistence.

The bridegroom’s sense of honour led him to hand his future wife the Diary in which, mingled with hopes,

prayers, self-castigations, and self-denunciations, the sins and excesses of his bachelorhood were recorded. To the girl who had looked upon him as a personification of the virtues, this revelation came as a great shock; but after a sleepless night passed in weeping bitterly over it, she returned the Diary and forgave the past.

To get married it was necessary first to confess and receive the eucharist. Tolstóy's own experiences in this matter are narrated in Chapter I of Part V of *Anna Karénina*, where they are attributed to Lévin.

The marriage took place within a week of the proposal, namely on the 23rd September 1862, in the Court church of the Krémelin, the bridegroom being thirty-four and the bride eighteen years of age. When the ceremony was over the couple left Moscow in a *dormeuse* (sleeping carriage), and drove to Yásnaya Polyána, where Tolstóy's brother Sergéy and Aunt Tatiána were awaiting them.

Fet records the letter in which Tolstóy informed him of his marriage:

Fétoushka [an endearing diminutive of Fet] Uncle, or simply Dear Friend Afanási Afanásevich!—I have been married two weeks and am happy, and am a new, quite a new man. I want to visit you, but cannot manage it. When shall I see you? Having come to myself I feel that I value you very, very much. We have so many unforgettable things in common: Nikólenka, and much besides. Do drive over and make my acquaintance. I kiss Márya Petróvna's hand. Farewell, dear friend. I embrace you with all my heart.

In another letter belonging to the same period he writes:

I am writing from the country and while I write, from upstairs where she is talking to my brother, I hear the voice of my wife whom I love more than all the world. I have lived to the age of thirty-four without knowing that it was possible to love and to be so happy. When I am more tranquil I will write you a long letter. I should not say 'more tranquil' for I am now more tranquil and clear than I have ever been, but I should say, 'when I am accustomed to it'. At present I have a constant feeling of having stolen an undeserved, illicit

happiness not intended for me. There . . . she is coming! I hear her, and it is so good! . . . And why do such good people as you and, most wonderful of all, such a being as my wife, love me?

It did not much disturb his happiness when, before they had been married a fortnight, something happened that might easily have led to very disagreeable consequences. On 3rd October the Minister of the Interior called the attention of the Minister of Education to the harmful nature of the *Yásnaya Polyána* magazine. This is what he wrote:

A careful perusal of the educational magazine, *Yásnaya Polyána*, edited by Count Tolstóy, leads to the conviction that that magazine . . . frequently propagates ideas which apart from their incorrectness are by their very tendency harmful. . . . I consider it necessary to direct your Excellency's attention to the general tendency and spirit of that magazine, which often infringes the fundamental rules of religion and morality. . . . I have the honour to inform you, Sir, of this, in the expectation that you may be inclined to consider it desirable to direct the special attention of the Censor to this publication.

Fortunately the decision did not lie with the Minister of the Interior but with the Minister of Education, who on receiving this communication had the magazine carefully examined and, on 24th October, replied that he found nothing harmful or contrary to religion in its tendency. It contained extreme opinions on educational matters no doubt, but these, he said, should be criticized in educational periodicals rather than prohibited by the Censor. 'In general,' added the Minister,

I must say that Count Tolstóy's educational activity deserves full respect, and the Ministry of Education is bound to assist and co-operate with him, though it cannot share all his views, some of which after full consideration he will himself probably reject.

Other things besides the suspicion in which he was held by the Minister of the Interior tended to discourage Tolstóy. His magazine had few subscribers and at-

tracted little attention. The year's issue was causing him a loss of about 3,000 rubles—a larger sum than he could well afford to throw away. So he decided to discontinue it after the twelfth number. The month after his marriage he also ceased to devote attention to the school, which was too great a tax on his time and energies.

It has often been said that the obstacles placed in his way by the Government turned him aside from educational work, but in speaking to me of it Tolstóy remarked that the main factor really was his marriage and pre-occupation with family life.

Both he and his wife were absorbed by their personal happiness, though from time to time small quarrels and misunderstandings arose between them. So impulsive and strenuous a nature as Tolstóy's was sure to have its fluctuations of feeling, but on the whole the ties binding the couple together remained strong and close while the months passed into years.

The Countess's parents used to say: 'We could not have wished for greater happiness for our daughter.' The Countess not only loved Tolstóy dearly as a husband but had the deepest admiration for him as a writer. He on his side often said that he found in family life the completest happiness, and in Sófyá Andréevna not only a loving wife and an excellent mother for his children, but an admirable assistant in his literary work, in which, owing to his careless and unmethodical habits, an intelligent and devoted amanuensis was invaluable. The Countess acquired remarkable skill in deciphering his often extremely illegible handwriting, and was sometimes able to guess in a quite extraordinary way the meaning of his hasty jottings and incomplete sentences.

One drawback to their almost complete happiness lay in the fact that, though active and possessed of great physical strength, Tolstóy seldom enjoyed any long periods of uninterrupted good health. In his correspondence we find frequent references to indisposition. In early manhood, he seems to have distended his stomach and, especially after the hardships endured during the

war of 1854-5, he was subject to indigestion for the rest of his days.

Another cause of occasional distress was the strong tendency to jealousy that husband and wife both suffered from. How Tolstóy himself could behave he has described for us in chapters XI to XV of Part VI of *Anna Karénina* (though the treatment of Vásenka Veslóvsky there recounted was actually applied to an undesirable admirer of Tánya's). On her side the Countess has told how she disguised herself and went out expecting her husband to mistake her for a peasant woman and accost her. Beyond her knowledge of what had occurred before marriage she never had any real ground for suspecting his fidelity.

Town life did not attract him; still, towards the close of the year of his marriage, he and the Countess spent some weeks in Moscow.

They were however soon back at Yásnaya. In February, 1863 Fet visited them there, and found them overflowing with life and happiness.

On 15th May, after they had by some chance just missed meeting Fet at the house of a neighbouring proprietor, Tolstóy wrote to his friend:

We just missed seeing you and how sorry I am that we did! How much I want to talk over with you. Not a day passes without our mentioning you several times. My wife is not at all 'playing with dolls'. Don't insult her. She is my serious helpmate, though now bearing a burden from which she hopes to be free early in July. What won't she do afterwards? We are *ufanizing*¹ little by little. I have made an important discovery which I hasten to impart to you. Clerks and overseers are only a hindrance in the management of an estate. Try the experiment of dismissing them all; then sleep ten hours a day, and be assured that everything will get along *not worse*. I have made the experiment and am quite satisfied with its success.

¹ This word when first invented by Nicholas Tolstóy meant to work like a peasant, but it had by now come to mean farming in general.

How, oh how, are we to see one another? If you go to Moscow with Márya Petróvna and do not visit me, it will be dreadfully offensive. (My wife, who was reading this letter, prompted that sentence.) I wanted to write much, but time lacks. I embrace you with all my heart, my wife bows profoundly to you, and I to your wife.

Business: When you are in Orél, buy me 20 puds [720 lb.] of various kinds of twine, reins, and shaft-traces, if they cost less than 2.30 rubles per pud including carriage, and send them me by a carter. The money shall be paid at once.

Fet soon availed himself of the invitation, and after driving past the low towers that mark the entrance to the birch alley leading to the house, he came upon Tolstóy eagerly directing the dragging of a lake and taking all possible care that the carp should not escape. The Countess, in a white dress, came running down the alley with a huge bundle of barn-door keys hanging at her waist. After cordially greeting the visitor she, notwithstanding her 'exceedingly interesting condition', leapt over the low railing between the alley and the pond. It will however be better to quote Fet's own account of his visit:

'Sónya, tell Nestérka to fetch a sack from the barn and let us go back to the house,' said Tolstóy—who had already greeted me warmly without losing sight of the carp-capturing operations the while.

The Countess immediately detached a huge key from her belt and gave it to a boy, who started at a run to fulfil the order.

'There,' remarked the Count, 'you have an example of our method. We keep the keys ourselves, and all the estate business is carried on by boys.'

At the animated dinner table the carp we had seen captured made their appearance. We all seemed equally at ease and happy. . . .

That evening was one truly 'filled with hope'. It was a sight to see with what pride and bright hope Tatiána Alexandrovna, the kindest of aunts, regarded the young people she so loved, and how turning to me said frankly, 'You see, with *mon cher Léon* of course things could not be otherwise.'

As to the Countess, life to one who in her condition leapt

over fences could not but be lit up with the brightest of hopes. The Count himself, who had passed his whole life in an ardent search for novelties, evidently at this period entered a world till then unknown, in the mighty future of which he believed with all the enthusiasm of a young artist. I myself during that evening was carried away by the general tone of careless happiness and did not feel the stone of Sisyphus oppressing me.

On 28th June 1863 a son, Sergéy, was born. During the first eleven years of marriage, the Countess bore her husband eight children, and another five during the next fifteen years: making in all, thirteen in twenty-six years.

But we must turn back a few months to mention the works by Tolstóy which appeared during this year.

In the January number of the *Russian Messenger* Katkóv had published *The Cossacks*, which Tolstóy had held back to revise and had only delivered in December.

In the February number of the same magazine appeared *Polikúshka*, the story of a serf who, having lost some money belonging to his mistress, hangs himself.

These stories are referred to in the following letter from Tolstóy to Fet, undated, but written in 1863:

Both your letters were equally important, significant, and agreeable to me, dear Afanásy Afanásevich. I am living in a world so remote from literature and its critics that on receiving such a letter as yours my first feeling is one of astonishment. Whoever was it wrote *The Cossacks* and *Polikúshka*? And what's the use of talking about them? Paper endures anything and editors pay for and print anything. But that is merely a first impression; afterwards one enters into the meaning of what you say, rummages in one's head, and finds in some corner of it, among old, forgotten rubbish, something indefinite, labelled *Art*; and pondering on what you say agrees that you are right, and even finds it pleasant to rummage about in that old rubbish amid the smell one once loved. One even feels a desire to write. Of course, you are right. But then there are few readers of your sort.

Polikúshka is the chatter of a man who 'wields a pen' on the first theme that comes to hand; but *The Cossacks* has some matter in it, though poor. I am now writing the story of a pined gelding, which I expect to print in the autumn. [It did

not appear till 1888.] But how can one write now? Invisible efforts—and even visible ones—are now going on; and moreover I am again up to my ears in farming. So is Sónya. We have no steward; we have assistants for field-work and building, but she, single-handed, attends to the office and the cash. I have the bees, the sheep, a new orchard, and the distillery. It all progresses little by little, though of course badly compared with our ideal.

What do you think of the Polish business? [the insurrection of 1863 then breaking out.] It looks bad! Shall we—you, I, and Borísov—not have to take our swords down from their rusty nails? . . .

The bees, which Tolstóy here places first among his outdoor duties, occupied much of his time, and he often spent hours studying their habits.

Turgénev, writing to Fet, commented on *The Cossacks* as follows:

I read *The Cossacks* and went into ecstasies over it, so did Bótkin. Only the personality of Olénin spoils the generally splendid impression. To contrast civilization with fresh, primeval Nature there was no need again to produce that dull, unhealthy fellow always preoccupied with himself. Why does Tolstóy not get rid of that nightmare?

Several months later he wrote:

After you left, I read Tolstóy's *Polikúshka* and marvelled at the strength of his huge talent. But he has used up too much material, and it is a pity he drowned the son. It makes it too terrible. But there are pages that are truly wonderful! It made a cold shudder run down even my back, though you know my back has grown thick and coarse. He is a master, a master!

Tolstóy was now fairly started on the life he was destined to lead for sixteen years: a quiet country life, occupied with family joys and cares. These years followed one another with so little change that the story of a decade and a half can almost be compressed into a sentence. Children came in quick succession, two great novels and an *ABC Book* were produced, a large orchard was planted with apple trees, the Yásnaya Polyána

property was improved and new estates were purchased east of the Vólga.

During 1863 he wrote two plays which he did not publish. One, a farcical comedy called *The Nihilist*, was privately performed at home with success. The second, also a comedy, written on a topic of the day, was called *The Infected Family*. Hoping to have it staged, Tolstóy took it to Moscow early in 1864; but the theatrical season was then already too far advanced, and he never subsequently cared to have it either published or acted.

The Countess Tolstóy's brother, S. A. Behrs (who from 1866, when he was a boy of eleven, till 1878, spent every summer with the Tolstóys), in his *Recollections of Count Tolstóy* gives a very interesting account of the life at Yásnaya. He mentions that a proverb about the hard fate of penniless noblemen prompted Tolstóy to take all possible care to provide for his children's future; and apart from his literary work, the passage in the letter quoted above about his bees, sheep, new orchard, and distillery, shows how this care was applied.

In his *Confession*, Tolstóy says of the years now under review:

Returning from abroad I married. The new conditions of happy family life completely diverted me from all search for the general meaning of life. My whole existence was centred at that time in my family, wife, and children, and in care to increase our means of livelihood. My striving after self-perfection and progress was now again replaced by the effort simply to secure the best possible conditions for myself and my family.

Again, writing in 1903 of this middle period of his life, Tolstóy says:

Then came a third, an eighteen-year period which may be the least interesting of all (from my marriage to my spiritual re-birth) and which from a worldly point of view may be called moral: that is to say, during those eighteen years I lived a correct, honest, family life, not indulging myself in any vices condemned by public opinion, but with interests wholly limited to selfish cares for my family, for the increase of our

property, the acquisition of literary success, and all kinds of pleasure.

After the Emancipation the landlords in many parts of Russia had more or less serious friction with the peasants, among whom stories were rife to the effect that the Tsar intended to give them all the land but had been deceived by the officials into only giving part; and for a time riots were not infrequent. There was no serious trouble of this sort on Tolstóy's estate, but his sister (whom I met at Yásnaya in 1902 long after her husband's death, when she, a nun, had leave from her Convent to visit her brother after he had been seriously ill) told me that on one occasion the peasants refused to make the hay, and to save it from being lost, Tolstóy, his wife, the members of the family, and the masters from eleven neighbouring schools, set to work with a will and by strenuous exertion saved the crop before the weather changed.

On settling down to married life Tolstóy planned a great novel. The epoch he at first intended to deal with was that of the Constitutionist conspiracy which came to a head on the accession of Nicholas I to the throne in December 1825. That very premature military plot was quickly snuffed out. So little were things ripe for it that many of the soldiers who shouted for a 'Constitution' (*Konstitútsia*) thought they were demanding allegiance to Nicholas's elder brother Constantine, who having married a Polish lady of the Roman Catholic faith had renounced his right to the throne. While planning the work, Tolstóy found himself carried back to the scenes amid which his characters had grown up—the time of the Napoleonic wars and the invasion of Russia by the French in 1812. Here was a splendid background for a novel, and laying *The Decembrists* aside he commenced *War and Peace*, a work conceived on a gigantic scale and which achieved a splendid success.

His attention, as we have already seen, was however not wholly absorbed by literature, but divided between that and the management of his property. During his

stay among the Kirghiz in the Province of Samára he had noticed how extremely cheap and how fertile was the land in those parts. He therefore wished to purchase an estate there, and in the autumn of 1864 visited the district with that end in view. In October he returned to Yásnaya. In November he wrote to Fet, mentioning his laborious preparations for *War and Peace*:

I am in the dumps and am writing nothing, but work painfully. You cannot imagine how hard I find the preliminary labour of ploughing deep the field in which I must sow. To consider and reconsider all that may happen to all the future characters in the very large work I am preparing, and to weigh millions of possible combinations to select from among them a millionth part, is terribly difficult. And that is what I am doing. . . .

Late in that month he again wrote:

This autumn I have written a good deal of my novel. *Ars longa vita brevis* comes to my mind every day. If one could but make time to accomplish a hundredth part of what one understands—but only a thousandth part gets done! Nevertheless the consciousness that *I can* is what brings happiness to men of our sort. You know that feeling, and I experience it with particular force this year.

The year 1864 saw the publication of the first collected edition of Tolstóy's works. The list at the end of this volume shows the twenty 'trials of the pen' which preceded *War and Peace*, and had already placed Tolstóy in the front rank of Russian writers. They filled four very substantial volumes.

One day in October Tolstóy went out for a ride on his favourite horse, an English thoroughbred named Máshka, which had long been standing. His two borzoi dogs accompanied him. After he had ridden some way, a hare started up and the dogs rushed after it. Tolstóy had not come out with the idea of hunting, but on seeing the dogs chasing the hare could not restrain himself and galloped after them, uttering the hunting cry, 'Atoú!' The weather was bad, the ground slippery, and the

horse stumbled at a narrow ravine and fell, dislocating and breaking its rider's arm. The horse ran away and Tolstóy, who was quite alone and several miles from home, fainted. When he came to he managed to drag himself more than half a mile to the highroad, where he lay in great pain. Some peasant carts passed by, but at first he could not attract any one's attention. When at last he was noticed, in order not to alarm his wife, he asked to be taken to the hut of an old wife, Akulina, famed as a bone-setter. In spite of all she and her son Iván could do—soaping, pulling, twisting, and bandaging the arm—they could not set it, and Tolstóy continued to endure great pain.

The Countess, who had meanwhile heard of the accident, reached the hut late at night. She at once arranged to have her husband taken home, and sent to Túla for a doctor, who arrived about 3 a.m. and after administering chloroform succeeded, with the aid of two labourers who were called in to assist, in setting the arm. On coming to, Tolstóy's disbelief in the efficiency of doctors prompted him to send for another surgeon. After a consultation the two physicians decided that everything had been done properly and that Tolstóy must lie up for six weeks to allow the arm to recover. When that time was past, Tolstóy asked for his gun and fired it off to test his arm. No sooner had he done so than he again felt great pain. He thereupon wrote to his father-in-law, Dr. Behrs, and on his advice went to Moscow to consult specialists. These differed in opinion, but after a week's hesitation a fresh operation was decided upon, and was carried out by two competent surgeons. It was quite successful and in due course the patient completely recovered the use of his arm.

Meanwhile the Countess (now nursing her second child, a daughter named Tatiána, born on 4th October 1864) remained at Yásnaya, where her eldest child, Sergéy, was taken dangerously ill with small-pox and diarrhoea.

While in Moscow Tolstóy concluded an arrangement

with Katkóv for the publication of *War and Peace* in the *Russian Messenger*.

On 23rd January 1865, when he had got over his accident, he wrote Fet another of those light-
1865 hearted letters which sometimes contain more truth than will bear saying seriously:

Shall I tell you something surprising about myself? When the horse threw me and broke my arm and when I came to after fainting, I said to myself: 'I am an author.' And I am an author, but a solitary, on-the-quiet, kind of author. . . . In a few days the first part of 'The Year 1805' [so the first part of *War and Peace* was originally called] will appear. Please write me your opinion of it in detail. I value your opinion and that of a man whom I dislike the more, the more I grow up—Turgénev. He will understand. All I have printed hitherto I consider but a trial of my pen; what I am now printing, though it pleases me better than my former work, still seems weak—as an Introduction must be. But what follows will be—tremendous!!! . . . Write what is said about it in the different places you know, and especially how it goes with the general public. No doubt it will pass unnoticed. I expect and wish it to do so, if only they don't abuse me, for abuse upsets one. . . .

I am glad you like my wife, though I love her less than my novel still you know she is my wife. Be sure you come to visit us; for if you and Márya Petróvna do not stay here on your return from Moscow it will really, without a joke, be too stupid!

In May 1865 one sees by a letter of Tolstóy's to Fet that one of the children had been ill and he himself had been in bed for three days and barely escaped a fever. His wife's younger sister, Tánya, she of the contralto voice, who (with some admixture of his wife) served Tolstóy as model for Natásha in *War and Peace*, was spending the summer at Yásnaya as she did every year. The Countess Márya and her children were also there. The children, he says, were well and out all day in the open air. He adds:

I continue to write little by little, and am content with my work. The woodcock still attract me, and every evening I

shoot *at them*, that is generally past them. My farming goes on well, that is to say, it does not disturb me much—which is all I demand of it. . . .

In reply to a suggestion from Fet he goes on to say that he will not write more about the Yásno-Polyána school, but hopes some day to express the conclusions to which his three years' ardent passion for that work had brought him. Then follows a reference to the state of agricultural affairs after the Emancipation and an allusion to the question of famine—a subject destined to make great demands on Tolstóy's attention in later years:

Our affairs as agriculturists are now like those of a shareholder whose shares have lost value and are unsaleable on 'Change. The case is a bad one. Personally I only ask that it should not demand of me so much attention and participation as to deprive me of tranquillity. Latterly I have been satisfied with my private affairs, but the general trend—with the impending misery of famine—torments me more and more every day. It is so strange, and even good and terrible. We have rosy radishes on our table, and yellow butter, and well-baked, soft bread on a clean table-cloth; the garden is green and our young ladies in muslin dresses are glad it is hot and shady; while *there* that evil hunger-devil is already at work covering the fields with goose-weed, chafing the hard heels of the peasants and their wives, and cracking the hoofs of the cattle. Our weather, the corn, and the meadows, are really terrible. How are they with you?

The letter closes with advice to Fet to transfer his chief attention from the land to literature, and a statement that Tolstóy himself has done so and is finding life less difficult.

When Tolstóy went out hunting hares and foxes with borzoi dogs, Miss Tatiána Behrs (the Tánya alluded to above) used often to accompany him.

Between this lady and Count Sergéy Tolstóy (Leo's elder brother) an attachment grew up, during the first two years after Tolstóy's marriage which caused great distress to them both, for besides being twenty-two years older than the lady, Sergéy had lived for fifteen years

with, and had a family by, a fine woman who was a gipsy. Despite his real affection for his children and their mother, he proposed to Tánya, and she hardly realizing the position accepted him. It was however arranged that the marriage should be postponed, and that the couple were not to see one another for some time. When they did meet again, almost on the eve of marriage, Tánya noticed the distress Sergéy was suffering, but did not understand that it arose from the difficulty of abandoning a woman who was devoted to him. Leo Tolstóy, aware of her perplexity, explained the situation to her, and she immediately broke off the engagement, and held to her decision though it almost broke her heart to do so. Eventually she recovered from the disappointment, and in 1867 married Mr. A. M. Kuzmínski with whom she had been in love when she was fourteen. At the same time Sergéy legitimized his children by marrying their mother.

A vivid account of this whole affair, and of the tact, insight, patience, and affection Leo Tolstóy showed in dealing with it is given in *Family Views of Tolstóy* (Allen & Unwin) where also its reflection in *War and Peace* is shown, and how closely Natásha Rostóva was copied from life.

In this affair again one gets a glimpse of the experience which led Tolstóy, contrary to the opinion common among the Russian 'intelligentsia', to advocate faithfulness at all costs to a woman with whom one has once united.

Towards the end of May he visited the estate of Nikólskoe (which had become his after the death of his brother Nicholas), and he had the house there repaired. In June the whole family moved to Nikólskoe, where they lived very quietly, Tolstóy continuing to write his great novel. The Countess, besides having suggested some of the characters and repeatedly copied out the work, exerted an influence on it by persuading Tolstóy to modify and curtail his references to the dissolute conduct of Hélène. His friend D. A. Dyákov's estate was only ten miles

away and Tolstóy saw much of him. Dyákov was his chief adviser in agricultural matters and in his efforts to improve the stock of his cattle, pigs, and poultry. Almost the only other visitors at Nikólskoe were the Fets; and the poet records meeting there the Countess's 'charming sister' Tánya, and experiencing violent antipathy for the sour *kumys* about which Tolstóy was enthusiastic and a large tub of which stood near the front door.

While living at Nikólskoe Tolstóy was invited for a fortnight by a neighbouring landlord, Kiréevski, to a grand hunt, in which the huntsmen wore special costumes, and luxurious dinners were served in the woods. What interested Tolstóy most in all this was not the hunt, but the opportunity it afforded him of studying types of the old and new aristocracy.

At this period one hears of his playing the guitar and singing passionate love-songs.

During the autumn of 1865, accompanied by his eleven-year-old brother-in-law, he visited the battlefield of Borodinó. They left Moscow in Dr. Behrs's carriage, with post-horses. When the time came for them to have something to eat, they found that the lunch-basket had been left behind, and they had only a small basket of grapes. Thereupon Tolstóy remarked, 'I am sorry, not that we have left the basket of food behind, but that your father will be upset and will be angry with his man'. The journey took only one day, and they stayed at the monastery erected in memory of those who fell in the great fight. For two days Tolstóy investigated the scene of the conflict he was about to describe, and he then drew the plan of the fight that appears in *War and Peace*. Even in 1865 there were but few survivors of the campaign of 1812 to be found in the neighbourhood.

Tolstóy used at this time to spend whole days in the Rumyantsev Museum in Moscow, studying books and manuscripts relating to the times of Alexander I, and especially to the reforming and Masonic movements

which then sprang up in Russia but were subsequently suppressed on political grounds.

S. A. Behrs tells us that Tolstóy

was always fond of children and liked to have them about him. He easily won their confidence and seemed to have the key to their hearts. He appeared to have no difficulty in suiting himself to a strange child, and with a single question set it completely at ease, so that it began at once to chat away with perfect freedom. Independently of this he could divine a child's thought with the skill of a trained educationist. I remember his children sometimes running up to him and telling him they had a great secret; and when they persisted in refusing to divulge it he would quietly whisper in their ears what it was. 'Ah, what a papa ours is! How did he find it out?' they would cry in astonishment.

He also says:

Gifted by nature with rare tact and delicacy he is extremely gentle in his bearing and conduct to others. I never heard him scold a servant. Yet they all had the greatest respect for him, were fond of him, and seemed even to fear him. Nor with all his zeal for sport have I ever seen him whip a dog or beat his horse.

A servant who lived with him more than twenty years has said: 'Living in the Count's house from my childhood, I loved Leo Nikoláevich as though he were my father'; and in another place he remarks:

The Count had a stern appearance, but treated the servant excellently and made things easy for all strangers he met. He had a very good heart, and when he was cross with me for anything I, knowing his character, used at once to leave the room, and when next he called me it was as though nothing unpleasant had happened.

Speaking of Tolstóy's later years the same servant says:

Leo Nikoláevich has now become quite a different man. From 1865 to 1870 he was active in managing the estate, took interest in the cows, bred sheep, looked after the property, and in a word attended to everything. At that time he was hot-tempered and impulsive. He would order the trap to be brought when he wanted to go hunting. His man

Alexéy, would bring him his hunting-boots and the Count would shout at him, 'Why have you not dried them? You are not worth your salt!' Alexéy, knowing the Count's character, would take the boots away and bring them back almost directly. 'There! now they're all right,' the Count would say, and would brighten up instantly.

His love of the country and dislike of towns sprang partly from his keen appreciation of the charm and loveliness of Nature. He saw fresh beauty every day, and often exclaimed: 'What wealth God has! He gives each day something to distinguish it from all the rest.'

Sportsman and agriculturist himself, he maintained that sportsmen and agriculturists alone know Nature. To quote Behrs again:

No bad weather was allowed to interfere with his daily walk. He could put up with loss of appetite from which he occasionally suffered, but he could never go a day without a sharp walk in the open air. In general he was fond of active movement, riding, gymnastics, but particularly walking. If his literary work chanced to go badly, or if he wished to throw off the effects of any unpleasantness, a long walk was his sovereign remedy. He could walk a whole day without fatigue, and we have frequently ridden together for ten or twelve hours. In his study he kept a pair of dumb-bells, and sometimes had gymnastic apparatus set up there.

All luxury was distasteful to him, and much that ordinary people regard as common comforts seemed to him harmful indulgence, bad for the souls and bodies of men. Nothing could well be simpler than the arrangement of his house at Yásnaya, substantial and solidly built as it was with its double windows and the Dutch stoves so necessary to warm a Russian house. Most of the rooms had plain uncarpeted board floors. Only the rooms in an annexe built when the family increased had parquet floors.

He was not at all particular about what he ate, but objected to a soft bed or spring mattress and at one time used to sleep on a leather-covered sofa.

He dressed very simply, and when at home never wore starched shirts or tailor-made clothes, but adapted to

his own requirements the ordinary Russian blouse, having it made of woollen stuff for winter and of linen for summer. His out-door winter dress was also an adaptation of the sheepskin *shúba* and peasants' *caftán* made of the plainest material; and these afforded such good protection from the weather that they were often borrowed by members of the household as well as by visitors. The great simplicity of attire which he adopted on principle in later years involved therefore no great change in the country dress he had worn by preference long before.

During the writing of *War and Peace* Tolstóy generally enjoyed good spirits, and on days when his work had gone well he would gleefully announce that he had left 'a bit of my flesh in the inkstand'. One of his chief recreations was to go out hare-hunting with borzoi dogs, and this he often did in company with a neighbouring landed proprietor, Bíbikov.

After his marriage Tolstóy only made entries in his Diary intermittently, and from October 1865 onwards ceased for many years to keep it at all. We have few records of what he read at this period, but he mentions a novel by Druzhínin, a play by Ostróvski, Marmont's *Mémoires* (useful to him for *War and Peace*), Victor Hugo—'*Les Misérables*—strong'—Guizot, Joseph de Maistre and Prosper Merimée's *Chronique de Charles IX*. Of Merimée he notes: 'He is clever and sensitive, but not talented.'

He did not in general care much for Goethe, but when reading *Faust* notes: 'Poetry of intellect and poetry having for its object what can be expressed by no other art.' He has a number of references to Trollope:

Good, if it were not for diffuseness. . . . Read Trollope—good. There is a novelists' poetry: (1) in the interest of the arrangement of occurrences—Braddon, my (future) Cossack [the continuation he intended to write]; (2) in the presentation of manners on an historic background—*The Odyssey*, *Iliad*, and *The Year 1805* [under which name the first part of *War and Peace* appeared]; (3) in the beauty and gaiety of a

situation—*Pickwick*, *The Outlying Field* [a story he was writing, but afterwards abandoned]; (4) in people's characters—*Hamlet*, and my future work. . . .

Read *The Bertrams*—famous—

and a day later:

Trollope kills me by his mastery. I console myself that he has his and I have mine. To know one's own—or rather to know what is *not mine*, that is the chief art. I must work like a pianist.

Later he writes: 'Have finished Trollope. Too much conventional.' 'Read stupid Julia Kavanagh.'

On Twelfth Night a grand masquerade was held at Yásnaya; the festivities were kept up till past two
1866 in the morning and were followed by a troika drive next day.

That same January the family moved to Moscow, where they hired a six-roomed apartment for 155 rubles a month, and there they remained for six weeks while the second part of *War and Peace* was being printed.

Among the friends Tolstóy saw most of at this time were I. S. Aksákov and Prince D. Obolénski. He also attended the Moscow drawing school and tried his hand at sculpture—modelling a bust of his wife. It does not appear that he continued this occupation long.

In May 1866 a second son, Ilyá, was born and an English nurse was introduced into the family.

During this summer an infantry regiment was stationed near Yásnaya, in which a young Sub-Lieutenant named Kolokoltsóv was serving whom Countess Tolstóy had known in Moscow. He visited the Tolstóys, and introduced to them his Colonel, Únosha, and his fellow-officer Ensign Stasulévich, who had been degraded to the ranks because while he was on prison-duty a prisoner had escaped. Ensign Stasulévich was middle-aged but he had only recently regained his rank as officer.

One day Stasulévich and Kolokoltsóv called on Tolstóy and told him that a soldier serving as secretary in one of the companies of the regiment had struck his

Company Commander and was to be tried by court-martial. They asked Tolstóy to undertake the man's defence, which he, who always regarded capital punishment with abhorrence, readily agreed to do.

The circumstances of the case were these. The soldier, Shibúnin, was a man of very limited intelligence whose chief occupation was writing out reports. When he had any money he spent it on solitary drinking. The Captain in command of his company, a Pole, who apparently disliked him, frequently found fault with his reports and made him rewrite them. This treatment Shibúnin bitterly resented, and one day when he had been drinking, on being told to rewrite a document, he insulted and struck the Captain. By law the penalty for a private who strikes his officer was death. Tolstóy nevertheless hoped to save the man's life, and obtained permission to plead on his behalf. The trial took place on 6th June, the members of the court-martial being Colonel Únosha, Stasulévich, and Kolokoltsóv; the latter being merely a light-headed youngster.

Tolstóy, when recounting the incident to me, remarked that of the four occasions on which he had spoken in public, this was the time that he did so with most assurance and satisfaction to himself. He had written out his speech, the main point of which was that Shibúnin was not responsible for his actions, being abnormal and having, from the combined effect of intemperance and the monotony of his occupation, become idiotic and obsessed by an idea that his Company Commander did not understand report-writing and unfairly rejected work faultlessly done. The law decreed a mitigation of sentence for crimes committed by those who are not in full possession of their senses and, since this contradicted the paragraph allotting death as the sole punishment for a soldier who strikes his officer, Tolstóy argued that mercy should be extended to the prisoner.

Shibúnin was however sentenced to death. Tolstóy wished to appeal (through his aunt, the Countess A. A.

Tolstóy) to Alexander II for a pardon, but with characteristic disregard of details, omitted to mention the name of the regiment in which the affair had occurred, and this enabled the Minister of War to delay the presentation of the petition until the soldier had been shot, which occurred on 9th August.

In contrast with the action of the Colonel and the Minister was that of the peasants of the district who flocked in crowds to see the prisoner, bringing him milk, eggs, home-made linen, and anything their poverty could afford. When the day of execution arrived, Shibúnin went quite impassively to his death, to all appearance incapable of understanding what was happening. The people thronged around the post to which he was to be tied—the women weeping and some of them fainting. They fetched a priest to say Mass at his grave, and paid for the service to be repeated all day. At night contributions of copper money, linen, and candles such as are burnt in Russian churches, were laid upon his grave. Next day the Masses were recommenced and continued until the police forbade any more religious services and levelled the grave that the people might not continue to visit it.

The knowledge of such a difference between the spirit of the governors and the governed, helps us once again to understand Tolstóy's ultimate conviction that Government and the administration of law are essentially evil. In later life he would certainly not have been content to base his plea for mercy on merely legal grounds.

From time to time he continued to be troubled by ill health. In July 1866, for instance, he writes that he is confined to the house with pains in the stomach which make it impossible for him to turn quickly.

In November he expresses a sense of the importance of authorship. Fet, criticizing something in *War and Peace*, had quoted the words, *irritabilis poetarum gens*, but Tolstóy, replying 'Not I', welcomes the criticism, begs for more, and goes on to say:

What have you been doing? Not on the Zémstvo [County

Council] or in farming (all *that* is compulsory activity such as we do instinctively and with as little will of our own as the ants who make an ant-hill, in that sphere there is nothing good or bad), but what are you doing in thought, with the mainspring of your being, which alone has been, and is, and will endure in the world? Is that spring still alive? Does it wish to manifest itself? How does it express its wish? Or has it forgotten how to express itself? That is the chief thing.

By the autumn of this year the railway from Moscow to Kursk had been constructed as far as Túla, making it easier to get from Yásnaya to Moscow. Yet Tolstóy comparatively seldom felt tempted to leave his much-loved, tranquil, busy, country life, in which alone he found himself able to work with a maximum of efficiency.

About this time he planted a birch wood, which has since grown up and become valuable.

During the summer of 1867, despite the dislike and distrust of doctors which he shared with Rousseau, 1867 and which he has again and again expressed in his works, he was induced by the state of his health and his wife's persuasion to consult the most famous Moscow doctor of the time, Professor Zahárin, on whose advice he drank mineral water for several weeks.

Writing to Fet he says:

If I wrote to you, dear friend, every time I think of you, you would receive two letters a day from me. But one cannot get everything said, and sometimes one is lazy and sometimes too busy, as is the case at present. I have recently returned from Moscow and have begun a strict cure under the direction of Zahárin and, most important of all, I am printing my novel at Ris's, and have to prepare and send off MSS. and proofs every day under threat of a fine and, of delayed publication. That is both pleasant and also hard, as you know.

In November 1867 we find the whole family again established for a while in a lodging in Moscow, where they seem to have remained a large part of the winter.

Here Fet visited Tolstóy and announced to him that he had decided to arrange a Literary Evening for the benefit of the famine-stricken peasants of Mtsensk, the

district in which Fet's estate lay. Tolstóy met the suggestion with irony, maintaining that Fet had invented the famine, and in reply to a request that he would ensure the success of the evening by reading something, flatly refused to do so, declaring that he never had and never could do such a thing as read in public. Still, he lent Fet the chapter of *War and Peace* containing the wonderful description of the retreat of the Russian army from Smolénsk in fearful drought. This not having been published as yet, existed only in proof. (It forms Chapter V of Book X of Volume II of that work.) Read by Prince Kugúshev, the poet and dramatist, it evoked thunders of applause.

1868 On 12th April 1868 Turgénev, writing to Fet, said:

I have just finished the fourth volume of *War and Peace*. There are things in it that are unbearable, and things that are wonderful; and the wonderful things (they predominate) are so magnificently good that we have never had anything better written by anybody, and it is doubtful whether anything as good has been written.

About the same time V. P. Bótkin wrote from Petersburg: 'Tolstóy's novel is having a really remarkable success, every one here is reading it, and they not merely read it but become enthusiastic about it.'

1869 The Epilogue was not completed till late in 1869. On 30th August Tolstóy writes to Fet:

Do you know what this summer has been for me? An unceasing ecstasy over Schopenhauer, and a series of mental enjoyments such as I never experienced before. I have bought all his works, and have read and am reading them (as well as Kant's). And assuredly no student in his course has learnt so much and discovered so much as I have during this summer. I do not know whether I shall ever change my opinion, but at present I am confident that Schopenhauer is the greatest genius among men. You said he had written something or other on philosophic subjects. What do you mean by 'something or other'? It is the whole world in an extraordinarily vivid and beautiful reflection. I have begun translating him. Won't you take up that work? We would

publish it together. After reading him I cannot conceive how his name can remain unknown. The only explanation is the one he so often repeats, that except idiots there is scarcely any one else in the world. . . .

Tolstóy goes on to say that he was starting next day for the Government of Pénza to look at an estate he meant to buy 'in those out-of-the-way parts'. The servant who accompanied him has told how they travelled third class from Moscow to Nízhni, and how Tolstóy chatted with his fellow-travellers so that many of them took him 'for a common man'. The idea of buying the estate in Pénza was ultimately abandoned.

He had by then finished the last part of *War and Peace*, which was to appear complete in book form in November. Two volumes had been published in 1866, three more in 1868, and the sixth was not ready till 1869. (In subsequent editions the book was rearranged in fewer volumes.)

Though he had so completely conquered the laziness of which in early manhood he had accused himself as to have become a regular, indefatigable, and extremely hard worker, yet after the completion of so gigantic a task he felt the need of recuperation, and in summer wrote to Fet: 'It is now my dearest time: I neither write nor think, but feel happily stupid,' and he adds that he goes woodcock shooting and has killed eight at an outing.

That at this time he already felt a good deal of the repugnance he so strenuously expressed in later years for luxury and profuse expenditure, is indicated by his comment on the death of his acquaintance, the author V. P. Bótkin, which took place in 1869. Bótkin, a member of a wealthy family of tea-merchants, having lived with economy till he knew his death was approaching, then hired a splendid lodging in Petersburg, fitted it up with all possible comfort and luxury, engaged a chef from the Tsarévich's kitchen, paid daily attention to the dinner menu, and engaged famous musicians to perform quartets at his house. To the magnificent feasts he gave

every day (at which, owing to the state of his health, he himself participated chiefly as a spectator) he gathered a select circle of friends whose conversation interested him. He told his brother that these arrangements for the close of his life gave him the keenest pleasure, and that 'birds of Paradise are singing in my soul'. On 4th October a quartet and banquet had been arranged as usual, and many guests were expected—but V. P. Bótkin lay dead in his bed.

Tolstóy, hearing of this, wrote to Fet:

I was terribly shocked by the manner of V. P. Bótkin's death. If what is told of it is true, it is terrible. How is it that among his friends not one was found to give to that supreme moment of life the character suitable to it?

Before *War and Peace* was finished the Countess had borne four children—the fourth being a boy, born on 20th May 1869, and christened Leo—nursing them all herself, as she did her subsequent children, with three exceptions mentioned later on. Her willingness to do this was exceptional among women of her class, for the employment of wet-nurses was common in Russia.

Up to the age of ten the children were taught Russian and music by the Countess, and she even found time to make their clothes herself till they reached that age. Besides managing the household, her brother tells us that during the composition of *War and Peace* she found time to copy it out no less than seven times, a statement which cannot be taken literally: for greatly as Tolstóy believed in the proverb that 'Gold is got by sifting', and indefatigably as he revised his work, not all the chapters of *War and Peace* were altered that number of times. With Tolstóy the children learnt arithmetic; and they learnt to read French out of illustrated volumes of Jules Verne.

In all that concerned the education of the children his wife at this time willingly constituted herself the executant of her husband's decisions, which were based largely on Rousseau's *Émile*, and were relaxed only in so

far as the Countess was unable to carry them out and Tolstóy found himself too much occupied with other affairs to do so. Later on there was less accord between the parents.

With the first child they tried to dispense with a nurse, but the attempt was unsuccessful, and subsequently Russian nurses and foreign *bonnes* were employed.

Toys were not allowed in the nursery but much liberty was allowed the children. No violent or severe punishments were inflicted, and none but their parents might punish them. They aimed at gaining their children's confidence by timely petting and kindly treatment.

If one of the children told a falsehood, this was treated as a serious matter and the punishment usually consisted in the parents treating the child coldly. As soon however as it showed that it was really sorry, the punishment ceased; but a child was never persuaded to say it was sorry or to promise not to repeat its fault.

All the grown-up people in the house were expected to remember that children are apt to copy and imitate what they see and hear, and the children were not kept away from the adults except at lesson time. Consequently when eight o'clock came and the children went to bed, Tolstóy would often remark: 'Now we are freer!'

Partly that they might learn English, partly because Tolstóy believed education to be freer in England than elsewhere, young English governesses were engaged to have charge of his children from the age of three to nine. He was extremely fortunate in his first choice, for the young lady remained with the family for six years and after her marriage continued in most friendly relations with them all.

He aimed at acquainting the children with Nature and developing their love of it, of animals, and of insects. He liked to let them realize their impotence and complete dependence on their elders, but always did this with kindly consideration.

The children were not allowed to order the servants about but had to *ask* them for anything they wanted;

and that a good example might be set, every one in the house was expected to do the same. This was the more important because the peasant servants in Russia, even after the Emancipation, were scarcely regarded as the same kind of beings as their masters, and a famous Russian author could say without any exaggeration: 'The balcony was rotten. Only servants went there; the family did not go there.' But to avoid giving a wrong impression I must here make a reservation. Though there was no idea of the two classes overlapping, and so wide a gap existed between them that they dressed quite differently (the peasants having their own costume and style of garments), very cordial and sincere good feeling often grew up between master and man or between proprietress and servant, and real human interest such as is shown in Tolstóy's descriptions of the servants in *Childhood* and in other stories. It was not at all unusual for Russian servants to join in the conversation of the family or visitors, and the whole relation between employers and employed was quite different to what it is in England, where on Sundays the maid may be mistaken for her mistress, except that she often looks more attractive.

The plan adopted in the Yásno-Polyána school, where no child was obliged to learn anything it did not care to learn, had to be abandoned in the family; but some scope was allowed to the children for rejecting what they had no capacity for, and they were never punished for neglecting to prepare lessons, though rewarded when they learnt well.

To illustrate Tolstóy's way of developing the minds of those about him, Behrs tells of his own case when as a youth he stayed at Yásnaya:

Regardless of my youth at the time, I remember that Tolstóy discussed quite seriously with me all the scientific and philosophic questions it came into my head to put to him. He always answered simply and clearly and never hesitated to admit the fact if he did not understand this or that matter. Often my talk with him took the form of a dispute, on which

I embarked despite my consciousness of his immense superiority.

The children were always eager to go for walks with their father, to answer his call to practise Swedish gymnastics, and to be on his side in any game he taught them. In winter they skated a good deal; but clearing the snow off the pond under his leadership was an even greater pleasure than the skating itself.

Before breakfast he would go for a walk with his brother-in-law, or they would ride down to bathe in the river that flows on one side of the estate. At morning coffee the whole family assembled and it was generally a very merry meal, Tolstóy being up to all sorts of jokes till he rose with the words, 'One must get to work', and went off to his study, taking with him a tumbler full of tea. While at work in his room not even his wife was allowed to disturb him, though at one time his eldest daughter, Tatiána, while still a little girl, was privileged to break this rule. The rare days (generally in summer) when he relaxed, were very welcome to the children, for their father's presence always brought life and animation with it. Generally after dinner, before resuming work, he would read a book not directly connected with the task he had in hand. It was often an English novel; and besides those writers already mentioned Mrs. Henry Wood made a great impression on him. Molière's plays always appealed to him strongly. In the evening he was fond of playing duets with his sister. He used to find it hard to keep up with her in playing long pieces with which he was not quite familiar, and when in difficulties would say something to make her laugh and cause her to play slower. If he did not succeed by means of this ruse, he would sometimes stop and solemnly take off one of his boots as though that must infallibly help him out of the difficulty, and would then recommence with the remark, 'Now, it will go all right!'

During the early years of his married life few visitors came to Yásnaya, except the numerous members of the Tolstóy-Behrs families, who stayed there chiefly in sum-

mer. The poet A. A. Fet, D. A. Dyákov, whom he had known from boyhood and had to some extent described, under the name of Nekhlyúdob, in *Youth*, N. N. Stráhov, the philosopher and critic, whose judgement he much respected and whom he frequently consulted throughout his literary career, and Prince S. S. Urúsov whom he had known during the siege of Sevastopol, seem to have been almost the only friends who visited him in the years immediately after his marriage. This suited Tolstóy very well, for to entertain many visitors would have seriously interrupted the absorbing work in which he was engaged.

Fet has been mentioned so often in this volume that a few lines must be devoted to describing a man who came in for much abuse on account of the anti-Emancipationist sympathies expressed in some of his writings. Like Tolstóy, he had grown up with no idea that it is incumbent on men of education and capacity to organize the society of which they are members, or remedy by political action such abuses as inevitably arise among human beings who do not keep the task of systematic social organization constantly in view. Of the impression Fet's political opinions made on the Liberals one may judge by a remark Turgénev addressed to him in a letter written in 1874: 'Twenty years ago, at the height of Nicholas I's régime, you dumbfounded me by announcing your opinion that the mind of man could devise nothing superior to the position of the Russian aristocracy of that day, nor anything nobler or more admirable.' The Liberals saw in Fet a political reactionary—which he was; but any one who reads his *Recollections* may also see how much personal worth may be combined with political indifferentism—a quality many Russians of his generation were brought up to regard as a virtue. In private life he was a really worthy man, and Tolstóy once very truly remarked to him:

There are some people whose talk is far above their actual morality, but there are also some whose talk is below that level. You are one who is so afraid of his sermon being above his practice that you intentionally talk far below your actual practice.

While still a young cavalry officer Fet began to write poetry, for which he had real talent, and after leaving the army he continued his literary career as an Art-for-Art's-sake man, producing verse translations of the Latin poets, besides original works of his own in prose and verse, and (after Tolstóy's suggestion, already recorded) translations from the German of Schopenhauer's *The World as Will and Idea*, and of Goethe's *Faust*.

In his dislike, or perhaps one should say ignorance, of politics, commerce, and the industrial revolution of the Western World (which was its most conspicuous achievement during the last one hundred and fifty years) as well as in his love of pure art, chiefly literary, he had much in common with Tolstóy. They could talk with profound sympathy of all that related to art, and were alike in their love of country life and in their relation to agriculture, as well as in the fact that the great problems of life centred for them round their own personality rather than around the community to which they belonged. Patriotic by instinct, it was no part of their conscious philosophy to be so, at least they never dreamed of that newer patriotism which seeks to arrange the production and distribution of the national wealth so that every member of the community may have an opportunity to live in decent conditions. They had therefore much in common, and one sees by Tolstóy's letters how greatly they enjoyed each other's society, though a time was coming when their friendship would wane.

Tolstóy had a strong dislike of leaving home even for a few days. When it was absolutely necessary to go to Moscow he would grumble at his hard fate, and Behrs, when he accompanied him, noticed how town life depressed Tolstóy, making him fidgety and irritable. When returning from a journey or a hunting expedition he would express his anxiety by exclaiming, 'If only all's well at home!' After he had been away from Yásnaya, Tolstóy never failed to give the home party

full and amusing accounts of what he had seen and heard.

A distinguishing feature of Tolstóy, already remarked on, but so strongly marked that it can hardly be insisted on too much, was the ardent and whole-hearted way he threw himself into whatever occupation he took up. On this point Prince D. D. Obolénski says:

I have seen Count L. N. Tolstóy in all phases of his creative activity. . . . Whatever his occupation he did it with conviction, firmly believing in the value of what he was doing, and always fully absorbed by it. I remember him as a man of the world and have met him at balls, and I remember a remark he once made, 'See what poetry there is in women's ball-dresses, what elegance, how much thought, how much charm even in the flowers pinned to the dresses!' I remember him as an ardent sportsman, as a beekeeper, as a gardener; I remember his enthusiasm for farming, for tree-planting, fruit-culture, horse-breeding, and much else.

A housekeeper who was with him for nine years said of him:

The Count himself looked after everything, and demanded extreme cleanliness in the cowhouse and in the pig-styes and in the sheep-cot. In particular he delighted in his pigs, of which he had as many as 300 paired off in separate styes. . . . There the Count would not allow the least dirt. Every day I and my assistants had to wash them all and wipe the floor and walls of the styes; then the Count on passing through the piggery of a morning would be very pleased, and would remark aloud: 'What management! . . . What good management!' But God have mercy on us if he noticed the least dirt! That at once made him shout out angrily. . . . The Count was very hasty and a doctor who used to come to Yásnaya said to him more than once in my presence: 'You must not get so angry, Count, it is very bad for your health.' . . . 'I can't help it,' he would reply. 'I want to restrain myself but can't do it. That, it seems, is the way I am made!' . . . His farming gave the Count a good revenue in those days. Besides the pigs and their litters he had 80 cows, 500 good sheep, and very many fowls. We used to make excellent butter, which we sold in Moscow at 60 kopeks a pound.

His management of property was characteristically

personal. He never took shares in any joint-stock company, but he bought land, bred cattle and horses of good quality, planted a large apple-orchard as well as a quantity of other trees, and in general acquired property he could manage himself, or (for he entrusted his Samára estates to stewards) over which he had full control. He was always more alive to the dangers and evils of commercial companies and large engineering and industrial undertakings, than to the good they have achieved by irrigating arid lands, uniting distant realms, and lightening man's toil by making iron bear some of his burdens for him.

Tolstóy, at this period of his life, furnishes an example of the fact that men of artistic temperament are apt to be untidy. Though he acknowledged the advantages of neatness in general he often remarked that it is a quality most frequently found in shallow natures. He himself simply could not, and therefore did not try to, keep his things in order. When he undressed he let his clothes or boots drop where he stood, and if he happened to be moving about his garments remained strewn around the room, and sometimes on the floor. Behrs remarks:

I noticed that to pack his things for a journey cost him great effort and when I accompanied him I used willingly to do it for him and thereby pleased him very much. I remember that once, for some reason, I did not at all wish to pack for him. He noticed this and with characteristic delicacy did not ask me to but put his things into his portmanteau himself, and I can assert positively that no one else, were they to try, could have got them into such fearful disorder as they were in, in that portmanteau.

When kindly reading through the manuscript of this work, Tolstóy's daughter, Countess Tatiána Tolstóy (Madame Sukhotín) wrote to me: 'I may say that in my recollection my father was very accurate, tidy, and clean. It is possible that he acquired these qualities as he grew older.'

It was a peculiarity of Tolstóy that he not only liked to have his sleep out without being disturbed, but never

could or would wake any one from sleep, and in cases of absolute necessity would ask some one else to relieve him of that disagreeable task.

Behrs recounts that when they sat up late the manservant sometimes fell asleep in his chair and omitted to serve up the cold supper. Tolstóy would never allow him to be disturbed on these occasions, but would himself go to the pantry to fetch the supper and would do this stealthily and with the greatest caution, so that it became a kind of amusing game. He would get quite cross with Behrs if the latter accidentally let the plates clatter or made any other noise.

Many years later, alluding in my presence to this peculiarity of his, Tolstóy remarked, 'While a man is asleep he is at any rate not sinning'.

1870 On 4th February 1870 Tolstóy wrote to Fet:

I received your letter, dear Afanásí Afanásevich, on 1st February, but even had I received it sooner I could not have come. You write, 'I am *alone, alone!*' And when I read that I thought, What a lucky fellow—*alone!* I have a wife, three children, and a fourth at the breast, two old aunts, a nurse, and two housemaids. And they are all ill together: fever, high temperature, weakness, headaches, and coughs. In that state your letter found me. They are now beginning to get better, but out of ten people I and my old aunt alone turn up at the dinner table. And since yesterday I myself am ill with my chest and side. There is much, very much, I want to tell you about. I have been reading a lot of Shakespeare, Goethe, Pushkin, Gógol, and Molière, and about all of them there is much I want to say to you. I do not take in a single magazine or newspaper this year and consider it very useful not to.

S. A. Behrs tells us that Tolstóy 'never read newspapers, and considered them useless, and when they contain false news even harmful. In his humorous way he would sometimes parody a newspaper style when speaking of domestic affairs.' His attitude towards journalists and critics (except his friend Stráhov) was rather scornful, and he was indignant when any one passed them even with third-rate authors. He considered

that it is a misuse of the printing press to publish so much that is unnecessary, uninteresting, and worst of all inartistic. He seldom read criticisms of his own work. 'His feeling towards periodicals in general had its source in his intense dislike of the exploitation of works of art. He would smile contemptuously at hearing it suggested that a real artist produces his works for the sake of money.'

Having said this much about his characteristics and peculiarities, let us note the extent to which his life and mode of thought at this time approximated to his later teaching. His humane relations towards the peasants, his condemnation of many of the manifestations of modern civilization, his simplicity in household matters and dress, his exemplary family life, humane educational ideals, deep love of sincerity and of industry (including physical labour), his ardent search for truth and self-improvement, his gradually increasing accessibility to and regard for others, his undoubted love of family and hatred of violence—indicate that the ideals of his later life were not far from him even before the conversion told of in his *Confession*.

On 17th February Tolstóy writes to Fet:

I hoped to visit you the night of the 14th but could not do so. As I wrote you, we were all ill—I last. I went out yesterday for the first time. What stopped me was pain in the eyes which is increased by wind and sleeplessness. I now, to my great regret, have to postpone my visit to you till Lent. I must go to Moscow to take my aunt to my sister's and to see an oculist about my eyes.

It is a pity that one can only get to your place after passing a sleepless, cigarette-smoky, stuffy, railway-carriage conversational night. You want to read me a story of cavalry life. . . And I don't want to read you anything because I am not writing anything; but I very much want to talk about Shakespeare and Goethe and the drama in general. This whole winter I am occupied only with the drama; and it happens to me, as usually happens to people who till they are forty have not thought of a certain subject or formed any conception of it and then suddenly with forty-year-old clearness turn their

attention to this new untasted subject—it seems to them that they discern in it much that is new. All winter I have enjoyed myself, lying down, drowsing, playing *béziq*ue, going on snow-shoes, skating, and most of all lying in bed (ill) while characters from a drama or comedy have performed for me. And they perform very well. It is about that I want to talk to you. In that, as in everything, you are a classic and understand the essence of the matter very deeply. I should like also to read Sophocles and Euripides.

There we see Tolstóy, as always, ardently devoting his attention to some great subject—which happens this time to be dramatic art. How real a grip he obtained of the subject with little theatre-going was shown seventeen years later, when he wrote one of the most powerful dramas ever produced and followed it up by a capital comedy; both plays so good that they became stock pieces all over Russia and achieved success in many other countries.

At the point we have reached there was no break in the manner of Tolstóy's life. He continued to live quietly as Yásnaya and to concern himself chiefly with literature and with the management of his estates and the welfare of his family. Children continued to be born in rapid succession, and with the increasing family his means increased. But we have reached the middle of that tranquil period of sixteen years which succeeded his marriage, and here, while—as one would say of another man—he was indefatigably studying the drama; or while, as one is inclined to say of him, he was resting and recuperating before undertaking his next great work, it is convenient to close this chapter.

CHAPTER X

NEARING THE CRISIS

As he grew older Tolstóy's love of outdoor exercise tended towards activity serving a productive purpose, and one finds a hint of this in the following letter to Fet, dated 11th May 1870:

I received your letter, dear friend, when returning perspiring home from work with axe and spade, and when therefore I was a thousand miles from things artistic in general and from our business in particular. On opening the letter I first read the poem and felt a tickling in my nose. On coming home to my wife I tried to read it to her, but could not do so for tears of emotion. The poem is one of those rare ones in which not a word could be added, or subtracted, or altered: it is a living thing, and admirable. . . .

I have just served for a week as juryman, and found it very interesting and instructive.

The next letter refers to the fact that Tolstóy did his best literary work in winter, when he often spent almost the whole day and sometimes part of the night at it. It was the time when his 'sap flowed':

2nd Oct. 1870.

It is long since we met, and in my winter condition, which I am now entering, I am specially glad to see you. I have been shooting; but the sap is beginning to flow and I am collecting it as it drips. Whether it be good or bad sap it is pleasant to let it flow in these long, wonderful, autumn evenings. . . . A misfortune has befallen me; the mare is ill. The veterinary says her wind has been broken, but I cannot have broken it.

The Franco-Prussian war occurred at this time and interested Tolstóy keenly. He had been in contact with the French in the Crimea, before the Napoleonic autocracy had long held sway, and he had visited France in 1857 and 1860, before the putrescent effect of the Empire had become fully apparent. Neither the idea of German national unity, nor Bismarck's and Moltke's

ideal of efficient organization and discipline, were things that much appealed to Tolstóy. So it happened that all his sympathies were on the side of the French and he felt assured of their triumph. His friend Prince S. S. Urúsov wrote letters to Katkóv's *Moscow Védomosti* demonstrating by analogies with games of chess, that the French were continually drawing the German armies into more and more desperate positions in which they must soon be destroyed. When, on the contrary, the French were utterly defeated, it came as a complete surprise; which illustrates the fact that men of great intellectual power, living isolated on their country estates, may at times go very considerably wrong in their estimate of the forces influencing the world.

On 12th February 1871 a daughter was born, who was christened Márya. In later life she, of all his children, was the most deeply influenced by her father's teaching. The Countess, who, as already mentioned, made a point of nursing her own children, owing to the neglect of an attendant became unable to do so in this instance before the child was many weeks old, and a wet-nurse was engaged; but as soon as the mother saw her child at a stranger's breast she burst into a flood of jealous tears, dismissed the nurse on the spot, and ordered the child to be fed by hand. Tolstóy when he heard what had happened declared that his wife had only the jealous affection natural to a true mother.

During that winter Tolstóy devoted himself strenuously to the study of Greek. On hearing this, Fet felt so sure Tolstóy would not succeed, that he announced his readiness to devote his own skin for parchment for Tolstóy's diploma of proficiency should the latter qualify himself to receive it. Accordingly, in December, Tolstóy wrote him as follows:

I received your letter a week ago, but have not answered because from morning to night I am learning Greek. I am writing nothing, only learning; and to judge by information reaching me through Borísov, your skin (to be used as parchment for my diploma in Greek) is in some danger. Improbable

and astounding as it may seem, I have read Xenophon, and can now read him at sight. For Homer, a dictionary and some effort are still necessary. I eagerly await a chance of showing this new trick to some one. But how glad I am that God sent this folly upon me! In the first place I enjoy it, and secondly, I have become convinced that of all that human language has produced truly beautiful and simply beautiful, I knew nothing (like all the others, who know but do not understand); and thirdly, because I have ceased to write, and never more will write, wordy rubbish. I am guilty of having done so; but by God I won't do it any more! Explain to me, for Heaven's sake, why no one knows Æsop's fables, or even delightful Xenophon, not to mention Plato and Homer whom I still have before me? In so far as I can as yet judge, our translations, made on German models, only spoil Homer. To use a banal but involuntary comparison, they are like boiled and distilled water, while he is like water fresh from the spring, striking the teeth with its sun-lit sparkle, even its specks only making it the clearer and fresher. . . . You may triumph: without a knowledge of Greek there is no education. But what kind of knowledge? How is it to be got? What is the use of it? To this I have replies clear as daylight.

S. A. Behrs tells us, 'I know for a fact that he learnt the language and read Herodotus in three months.'
 1871 While in Moscow that winter he visited Leóntev, then (and when I studied there three years later) Professor of Greek at the Katkóv Lyceum, to talk about Greek literature. Leóntev was not prepared to believe in the possibility of his having learnt Greek so rapidly, and proposed that they should read something at sight. It happened that they differed as to the meaning of three passages; but after a little discussion the Professor admitted that the Count's interpretations were right.

Tolstóy felt the charm of the literary art of the ancient world, and so keenly did he enter into the minds of those of whom he read, and so different to his own was the Greek outlook upon life, that the contradiction produced in him a feeling of melancholy and apathy profound enough to affect his health.

What clash of ideals produced this result we may guess when we consider how from his earliest years he

had been attracted by the Christian ideal of meekness, humility, and self-sacrifice, and how little this accords with the outlook on life of the ancient Greeks. In *What is Art?* written nearly forty years later, Tolstóy tells us that 'If, as among the Greeks, religion places the meaning of life in earthly happiness, in beauty and in strength, then art successfully transmitting the joy and energy of life would be considered good art' [good in regard to the feeling conveyed] 'but art transmitting the opposite feelings would be bad'. Again in the same work he says that the aesthetic theory he is combating, seeks to make it appear 'that the very best that can be done by the art of nations after 1,900 years of Christian teaching, is to choose as the ideal of life the ideal held by a small, semi-savage, slave-holding people, who lived 2,000 years ago, imitated the nude human body extremely well, and erected buildings pleasant to look at.'

To wean him from his absorption in Greek literature, his wife at first urged him to take up some fresh literary work; and finally, becoming seriously alarmed for his health, induced him to go eastward for a *kumýs* cure. He wrote to Fet at this time:

10 June 1871.

Dear Friend,—I have not written to you for a long time, nor been to see you, because I was, and still am, ill. I don't myself know what is the matter with me, but it seems like something bad or good, according to the name we give to our exit. Loss of strength, and a feeling that one needs nothing and wants nothing but quiet which one has not got. My wife is sending me to Samára or Sarátov for two months for a *kumýs* cure. I leave for Moscow to-day, and shall there learn where I am to go to.

In Moscow it was decided that he should go to the part of Samára he had visited before.

Railways were always an affliction to Tolstóy. Civilization had forced them on him without his wish and, as he argued in his educational articles, to the detriment of the peasant population. Personally he complained of disagreeable sensations he experienced when travelling

by rail, and compared these discomforts with the pleasure of riding on horseback. He objected both to the officious politeness of the conductors and to the way the passengers suspiciously shun one another. (This latter complaint is not one a Westerner would bring against Russians, for they seem to us the most sociable of fellow-travellers.) He used to insist on his wife always travelling first class. He himself went either first or third, but seldom second. To travel third was a more serious matter in Russia than in England, and he used purposely to choose a car in which there were peasants, and talked to all whom he met.

On this outward journey he went third class by rail to Nízхни Nóvgorod, and by steamer down the Vólga to the town of Samára. On the boat he took the opportunity to study the manners and customs of his fellow-passengers, natives of the Vólga district, and displayed his gift for making friends with people of all kinds. Before he had been two days on the boat he was on the friendliest terms with everybody, including the sailors, among whom he slept each night in the fore part of the vessel. Even when he met reserved or surly characters it was not long before he drew them out of their shells and set them chatting at their ease. One secret of this success was the unaffected interest he took in learning about other people's lives and affairs.

From Samára he went east for eighty miles on horseback, following the banks of the river Karalýk till he reached the village of that name. He had lived there in 1862 and was welcomed as an old acquaintance and friend by the Bashkírs, who always spoke of him as 'The Count'. The reader will remember that at the University Tolstóy had studied oriental languages. His knowledge of Tartar no doubt increased his popularity with the Bashkírs. He had with him a man-servant and his brother-in-law, Stepán Andréevich Behrs, then a lad of about sixteen, who subsequently in his *Recollections* gave an account of this outing. They lived, not in the 'winter village' of Karalýk, but about one and a half

miles away, in a *kochévka* on the open steppe. A *kochévka* is a dome-shaped semi-circular tent, made of a collapsible wooden trellis-work frame covered with large sheets of felt. It has a small painted door, and is usually carpeted with soft feather grass.

On first arriving at Karalýk, Tolstóy for some days felt depressed and unwell. He complained that he lacked capacity to feel either mental or physical pleasure, and looked at everything 'as though he were a corpse'—a characteristic usually most foreign to him and which in other people always evoked his dislike. It was however not long before he recovered his spirits and energy.

There were other visitors at Karalýk who had also come for a *kumýs* cure. They neither associated with the Bashkír nomads nor adopted their customs; but Tolstóy was extremely fond of the Bashkírs, associated much with them, and followed their diet strictly, avoiding all vegetable foods and restricting himself to meat and animal products. Dinner every day consisted chiefly of mutton, eaten with the fingers out of wooden bowls.

Tolstóy soon made friends with everybody, Bashkírs and Russian visitors alike, and thanks to his genial influence the whole place grew gay and lively. A professor of Greek from a Seminary for the education of priests might be seen trying a skipping-rope match with him; a procurator's assistant discussed legal and other questions, and there was a young Samára farmer who became his devoted follower.

Accompanied by Behrs and two of their new acquaintances, and taking a supply of guns and presents, Tolstóy went for a four days' drive through the neighbouring villages. The party had splendid duck-shooting by the lakes they passed, and were entertained and treated to *kumýs* by the Bashkírs at the *kochévkas* in which they rested. As opportunity presented itself they made suitable acknowledgements for their entertainment by giving presents to their hosts. One serious drawback to the hospitality was the fact that their hosts insisted on

feeding them with mutton and fat with their own hands without the intermediacy of fork or spoon, and it was out of the question to insult them by refusing such well-meant, though undesirable, attentions.

On one occasion Tolstóy happened to admire a horse that had separated from its herd, and remarked to Behrs, 'See what a beautiful milking mare that is'. An hour later, when they were taking leave, their host tied the animal to their conveyance, thus presenting it to his visitor. Of course on the return journey Tolstóy had to make an equivalent present in return.

Another incident of this stay in Samára was a visit to the Petróvski Fair, which was held once a year at Buzulúk, a small town some fifty miles from Karalýk. Here Russians, Bashkírs, Oural Cossacks, and Kirghíz mingled with one another, and Tolstóy was soon on a friendly footing with them all. He would chat and laugh with them even when they were drunk; but when one in that condition took it into his head to embrace the Count, Tolstóy's look was so stern and impressive that the fellow drew back his hands and let them fall, saying, 'No, never mind, it's all right!'

The following letter of 18th July 1871, to Fet, relates to Tolstóy's experience of the nomadic Bashkírs:

Thank you for your letter, dear friend! It seems that my wife gave a false alarm when she packed me off for a *kumýs* cure and persuaded me that I was ill. At any rate now, after four weeks, I seem to have quite recovered. And as is proper when one is taking a *kumýs* cure, I am drunk and sweat from morn to night, and find pleasure in it. It is very good here, and were it not for homesickness, I should be quite happy. Were I to begin describing, I should fill a hundred pages with this country and my own occupations. I am reading Herodotus, who describes in detail and with great accuracy these same galactophagous [milk-eating] Scythians among whom I am living.

I began this letter yesterday and wrote that I was well. To-day my side aches again. I do not myself know in how far I am ill, but it is bad that I am obliged to think—and cannot help thinking—about my side and my chest. This is the third

day that the heat has been terrible. In the *kibítka* it is as hot as on the shelf of a Russian bath, but I like it. The country here is beautiful, in its age—just emerging from virginity—in its richness, its health, and especially in its simplicity, and its unperverted population. Here as everywhere I look around for an estate to buy. This affords me an occupation and is the best excuse for getting to know the real condition of the district.

After a six weeks' stay Tolstóy returned to Yásnaya.

His search for an estate had been successful, and after persuading his wife that the investment was a sound one, he purchased two thousand acres.

During his wanderings on the steppe Tolstóy met many Molokáns, members of a Bible-Christian peasant sect. They based their faith on the Bible, rejecting the Greek Church with its traditions, priesthood, dogmas, ritual, sacraments, and icons. They were distinguished by an honesty and industry unusual among their Orthodox neighbours, and they abstained from all intoxicants.

It interested Tolstóy to mix with them, and he liked to discuss their beliefs, especially with a venerable leader named Aggéy. It so happened that in the neighbouring village of Pátrovka there was a very worthy young Russian priest, who was eager to convert the Molokáns and occasionally arranged debates with them on religious subjects. Tolstóy sometimes attended these debates: his object being not so much to convert the Molokáns as to understand the points on which they differed from the Russo-Greek Church. He also took an interest in the Mohammedan faith of his Bashkír friends, and on his return to Yásnaya read through a French translation of the Koran.

A few years later he associated much with the representatives of various sects and faiths, being then deeply interested in their beliefs; but at this time his interest in such matters was only beginning.

A letter of Turgénev's, written at this period, indicates how little he allowed his quarrel with Tolstóy the man to warp his appreciation of Tolstóy the artist. Writing to Fet on 2nd July 1871 he says:

Your letter again grieves me—I refer to what you write about L. Tolstóy. I have great fears on his account, for two of his brothers died of consumption, and I am very glad he is taking a *kumýs* cure, in the reality and efficacy of which I have faith. L. Tolstóy is the only hope of our orphaned literature; he cannot and must not vanish from the face of the earth as prematurely as his predecessors: Púshkin, Lérmon-tov, and Gógol.

Again in November, writing from Paris, he says:

I am very glad that Tolstóy's health is now satisfactory and that he is at work. Whatever he does will be good if only he does not himself mutilate his own handiwork. Philosophy, which he hates, has revenged herself on him in a strange way: she has infected him, and the enemy of rationalizing has plunged head over ears into rationalization! But perhaps all *that* has fallen away from him by now and left only the pure and powerful artist.

On returning home from Samára improved in health, Tolstóy turned his thoughts once more to matters educational, especially to the crying need of good primers for those learning to read. We have seen how strongly, in 1862, he had felt the lack of well-written books simple enough for beginners and peasant readers, and how he resented the monopolization of knowledge by the cultured classes entrenched behind barriers of pedantry. We have seen, too, how under the influence of Homer he swore he would no more write 'wordy rubbish', and the time had now come for this feeling to bear fruit. The task to which he devoted his powers at their zenith was the production of an *ABC Book* for beginners, as simple, clear, and perfect in form and subject-matter as possible.

By September he was hard at work, the Countess, as usual, acting as his amanuensis.

In an impulsive, kindhearted way she often rendered assistance to the poor, not merely among the Yásnaya Polyána peasants, but to others from a distance also, and the neighbouring peasants thought well of her.

The increase in the Tolstóy family was met this year

by a considerable enlargement of their house. By way of a house-warming to celebrate the completion of the building, a masquerade was arranged at Christmas, at which Tolstóy evoked great enthusiasm by appearing as a goat.

About this time Behrs and a school friend of his became sorely troubled about the state of their souls, and thought of entering a monastery. This is what he tells us of Tolstóy's relation to the matter:

His attitude towards my inclination was a most cautious one. I often went to him with my doubts and questions, but he always managed to avoid expressing his opinion, knowing how very great an influence it would have with me. He left it to me to work out my own convictions. Once however he spoke out with sufficient plainness. We were riding past the village church where his parents lie buried. Two horses were grazing in the churchyard. We had been talking over the only subject that then interested me.

'How can a man live at peace,' I asked, 'so long as he has not solved the question of a future life?'

'You see those two horses grazing there,' he answered; 'are they not laying up for a future life?'

'But I am speaking of our spiritual, not our earthly, life.'

'Indeed? Well, about that I neither know nor can know anything.'

Immediately after New Year he re-started his school,
1872 but the children (who often numbered thirty to thirty-five) met, not as formerly in another building, but in the hall, and other rooms, of the Tolstóys' enlarged house. In the mornings the Countess taught her own children, and in the afternoon she, her husband, and even seven-year-old Tánya and eight-year-old Sergéy, taught the peasant children, who came only at that time but yet made satisfactory progress, stimulated by the interest the Tolstóys took in them, by the pedagogic genius of the Count, and by a perception that education was a rare and valuable luxury which seldom came within the reach of Russian peasants.

In the *ABC Book* Tolstóy gives several stories of how he had learned to ride and of his dogs Milton and

Búlka. Easy as these stories are, they are admirably written, and combine brevity, simplicity, and sincerity; though their sincerity lies not in telling the facts just as they occurred, but in the truth of the feeling conveyed to the reader. Besides these and other stories, popular historical sketches, a number of translations and adaptations from *Æsop's Fables*, and from Indian, Hebrew, and Arabic sources, the work contains popular legends or folk-stories in verse. To make these as perfect as possible, he studied and collated all the versions of them he could collect.

The section on Arithmetic gave him an immense amount of work, for he would not content himself with the usual explanations of the various operations but devised explanations of his own.

The book contains some elementary natural science, and for the preparation of this Tolstóy, besides examining all sorts of text-books, consulted specialists on the various subjects and himself carefully performed most of the experiments he described.

To select readings in Church-Slavonic, he perused the monkish chronicles and Lives of the Saints.

Intending to include some readings on astronomy, he took up that study himself and became so interested in it that he sometimes sat up all night examining the stars.

When the news spread that Tolstóy was writing stories for his *ABC Book*, magazine editors besieged him with demands, and the first bits of the book to see the light were *A Prisoner in the Caucasus*, which appeared in one of the monthlies in February, and *God Sees the Truth*, which appeared in another in March.

Owing to some mismanagement, Tolstóy received nothing for the periodical rights of either of these stories, which in *What is Art?* he names as the best of all his works. They (as well as *The Bear Hunt*, also from the *ABC Book*) are now included in the *Twenty-three Tales*.

With what pleasure Tolstóy looked back to this part of his life's work was indicated by a remark he made to

me in 1902. Speaking of the popularity of *A Prisoner in the Caucasus* for public readings to the peasants, he added with evident satisfaction that when *A Prisoner in the Caucasus* is now mentioned it is always taken for granted that it is his story, and not Púshkin's famous poem of the same name, that is referred to.

In the following letter to Fet we get a glimpse of those thoughts on life's deepest problems which were a few years later to fill Tolstóy's mind completely.

30 Jan. 1872.

It is some days since I received your kind but sad letter, and not till to-day do I settle down to answer it.

It is a sad letter, for you write that Tyúchev is dying and that there is a rumour that Turgénev is dead, and about yourself you say the machine is wearing out and you want quietly to think of Nirvana. Please let me know quickly whether this is a false alarm. I hope it is, and that, in the absence of Márya Petróvna, you have taken slight symptoms for a return of your terrible illness.

In Nirvana there is nothing to laugh at, still less is there cause for anger. We all (I at least) feel that it is much more interesting than life; but I agree that however much I may think about it, I can think of nothing else than that Nirvana is nothingness. I only stand up for one thing: religious reverence—awe of that Nirvana.

There is, at any rate, nothing more important than it.

What do I mean by religious reverence? I mean this: I lately went to see my brother, and a child of his had died and was being buried. The priests were there, and a small pink coffin, and everything as it should be. My brother and I involuntarily confessed to one another that we felt something like repulsion towards ceremonial rites. But afterwards I thought, 'Well, but what should my brother do to remove the putrefying body of the child from the house? How is one to finish the matter decently?' There is no better way (at least, I could devise none) than to do it with a requiem and incense. How is it to be when we grow weak and die? Is nature to take her course, are we to . . . and nothing else? That would not be well. One wishes fully to express the gravity and importance, the solemnity and religious awe of that occurrence, the most important in each man's life. And I also can devise nothing more seemly for people of all ages and all

degrees of development, than a religious observance. For me at least those Slavonic words evoke quite the same metaphysical ecstasy as one experiences when one thinks of Nirvana. Religion is wonderful in that she has for so many ages rendered to so many millions of people these same services—the greatest anything human can render in this matter. With such a task how can she be logical? Yes—there is something in her. Only to you do I allow myself to write such letters, but I wished to write, and I feel sad, especially after your letter.

Please write soon about your health.—Your

LEO TOLSTÓY.

I am terribly dispirited. The work I have begun is fearfully hard, there is no end to the preparatory study necessary. The plan of the work is ever increasing, and my strength, I feel, grows less and less. One day I am well, and three days I am ill.

The work here referred to as 'fearfully hard' was preparation for a novel, which however he never wrote.

On 20th February he again wrote to Fet:

... Being in Moscow, I wished to call on the Bótkins to hear about you, but I fell ill, took to my bed, and it was all I could do to get home. Now I am better. At home all is well; but you will not recognize our house: we have been using the new extension all winter. Another novelty is that I have again started a school. My wife, and children, and I, all teach and are all contented. I have finished my *ABC Book* and am printing it. . . .

The next letter shows that his hope that he had finished the *ABC Book* was premature:

16th March 1872.

How I wish to see you; but I cannot come, I am still ill. . . . My *ABC Book* gives me no peace for any other occupation. The printing advances on the feet of a tortoise and the deuce knows when it will be finished, and I am still adding and omitting and altering. What will come of it I do not know but I have put my whole soul into it.

In May 1872 the Countess gave birth to another boy who was christened Peter.

The Moscow firm who were printing the book were not able to give Tolstóy satisfaction. Not only was the

printing a matter of difficulty owing to the variety of types required for a schoolbook of the kind, but Tolstóy, as usual, revised the work time after time while it was going through the press. At last, in May, he wrote to his trusty friend and admirer, N. Stráhov, saying that after four months' labour the printing was 'not only not finished, but had not even begun', and begging Stráhov to have the book printed in Petersburg and to take on himself for ample payment the whole task of revising the proofs. After some correspondence matters were arranged, though Stráhov declined to accept payment for the help he rendered.

Tolstóy explained to his friend that he wanted to make a profit on the book if possible. As a rule all Tolstóy's later teaching seems to grow out of his experience of life; but it would be hard for any one to work more conscientiously and well than Tolstóy laboured over this book, and yet in later life he speaks as though any admixture of mercenary motives is fatal to good literary work. We here seem, therefore, to come upon an exception to that rule.

Stráhov's assistance enabled Tolstóy (though he continued to give most careful instructions with regard to the treatment of the various sections of the book) to get a much needed change; and after having as usual worked during the winter and spring up to the very limit of his strength, he went for a short visit to his Samára estate, where he arranged about building and about ploughing up the virgin soil. A peasant from Yásnaya village was appointed steward of the new estate, and was instructed to see to the building of the house there. Being far away from home Tolstóy was anxious about his *ABC Book*; so he cut short his stay and returned to Yásnaya before the end of July. There he learned that a fine young bull of his had gored its keeper to death. The unpleasantness of such an occurrence and of the legal investigation consequent on the man's death was greatly increased by the fact that the investigating magistrate, an incompetent and arrogant young official, wrongly held Tolstóy

responsible for 'careless holding of cattle', and besides commencing criminal proceedings against him, obliged him to give a written undertaking not to leave Yásnaya. Prince D. D. Obolénski tells how Tolstóy arrived one day at a meet at the Prince's estate of Schahovskóy (some thirty miles from Yásnaya) late and much upset, and told of an examination he had that morning undergone at the hands of the investigating magistrate, whose duties included those of coroner. 'Being an excitable man,' says Obolénski, 'Tolstóy was extremely indignant at the magistrate's conduct, and told how the latter had kept one of the Yásno-Polyána peasants in prison for a year and a half on suspicion of having stolen a cow, which then turned out to have been stolen by some one else. "He will confine me for a year," added Tolstóy. "It is absurd, and shows how utterly arbitrary these gentlemen are. I shall sell all I have in Russia and go to England, where every man's person is respected. Here every police-officer, if one does not grovel at his feet, can play one the dirtiest tricks!"'

P. F. Samárin, who had also come to the hunt, opposed Tolstóy with animation, arguing that the death, or even the mutilation, of a man was so serious a matter that it could not be left without judicial investigation. After long argument Samárin more or less convinced Tolstóy, and the latter before retiring to rest remarked to Obolénski, 'What a wonderful power of calming people Samárin has!'

The judicial proceedings dragged on for more than a month, and it was not till late in September that Tolstóy was again free to take a journey to Moscow. The proceedings, first against him and then against his steward, were abandoned, but not before the newspapers had taken the matter up and made a fuss about it.

At last, in November, the *ABC Book* was published. It sold slowly, and was attacked by some of the papers. Tolstóy however was not discouraged, but held to his belief that (as he expressed it to Stráhov) he had 'erected a monument'—a conviction amply justified by

the ultimate success of the work. He had indeed produced a reading-book far superior to anything that had ever existed in Russia, and probably unmatched in any language. With certain modifications, to be mentioned later on, it has continued to circulate throughout Russia ever since.

In connexion with his other efforts to popularize his system of instruction, Tolstóy, in October 1872, invited a dozen teachers from neighbouring schools to visit him for a week at Yásnaya. They were accommodated in his second house (called, as is customary in Russian when speaking of a subsidiary residence, 'the wing'); and a number of illiterate boys were collected from villages within reach, to be taught on Tolstóy's lines. He also formed a project of establishing a 'University in bark shoes' [country peasants wear bark shoes] or, in other words, a training college in which peasants could become teachers without ceasing to be peasants. This plan occupied his attention off and on for some years, but, owing to causes related later, never came to fruition.

About this time Fet sent Tolstóy a letter in rhyme, to which the latter replied as follows:

12 November 1872.

The causeless shame felt by the onion
Before the sweetly-scented rose,
My dearest Fet, I should be feeling,
Were I to answer you in prose.

And yet in maiden verse replying,
By sad misgivings I'm beset:
The when and where, yourself please settle—
But come and visit us, dear Fet.

Tho' drought may parch the rye and barley,
Yet still I shall not feel upset
If I but spend a day enjoying
Your conversation, dearest Fet!

Too apt we often are to worry;
O'er future ills let us not fret:
Sufficient for the day, its evil—
It's best to think so, dearest Fet!

Joking apart, write quickly and let me know when to send horses to the station to meet you. I want terribly to see you.

Having at last got his *ABC Book* off his hands, Tolstóy resumed his preliminary labours for a large novel, which was to deal with the period of Peter the Great. On 19th November 1872 the Countess wrote to her brother:

Our life just now is very, very strenuous. All day we are occupied. Leo sits surrounded by a pile of portraits, pictures and books, engrossed in reading, marking passages and taking notes. In the evening, when the children have gone to bed, he tells me his plans and what he means to write. At times he is quite discouraged, falls into despair, and thinks nothing will ever come of it. At other times he is on the point of setting ardently to work, but as yet I cannot say he has actually written anything, he is still preparing.

A month later she wrote:

As usual we are all of us very busy. The winter is the working time for us proprietors, just as much as summer is for the peasants. Leo is still reading historical books of the time of Peter the Great and is much interested in them. He notes down the characters of various people, their traits, as well as the way of life of the boyars and the peasants, and Peter's activity. He does not yet know what will come of it all, but it seems to me we shall have another prose poem like *War and Peace*—but of the time of Peter the Great.

A few months later he definitely abandoned the project. His opinion of Peter the Great ran directly
1873 counter to the popular one, and he felt out of sympathy with the whole epoch. He declared there was nothing great about the personality or activity of Peter whose qualities were all bad. His so-called reforms, far from aiming at the welfare of the people aimed simply at his own personal advantage. He founded Petersburg because the boyars, who were influential and consequently dangerous to him, disapproved of the changes he made and because he wished to be free to follow his immoral way of life. The changes and reforms he introduced were borrowed from Saxony, where the laws were mos

cruel and the morals most dissolute—all of which particularly pleased him. This, Tolstóy holds, explains Peter's friendship with the Elector of Saxony, who was among the most immoral of rulers. He also considers that Peter's intimacy with the pieman Ménshikov and with the Swiss deserter Lefort, is explained by the contempt in which Peter was held by all the boyars, among whom he could not find men willing to share his dissolute life. Most of all Tolstóy was revolted by the murder of Peter's son Alexis, in which affair Tolstóy's own ancestor had played a very prominent part.

Almost simultaneously with the abandonment of the project to which he had devoted so much time and attention, without any special preparation he began to write his second great novel, *Anna Karénina*.

The year before, a lady named Anna who lived with Bíbikov, a neighbouring squire mentioned on a previous page, had committed suicide by throwing herself under a train out of jealousy of Bíbikov's attentions to their governess. Tolstóy knew all the details of the affair and had been present at the post-mortem. This supplied him with a theme; but it was not till March 1873, and then as it were by accident, that he actually began to write the book. One day a volume of Púshkin happened to be lying open at the commencement of *A Fragment*, which begins with the words, 'The guests had arrived at the country house'. Tolstóy, noticing this, remarked to those present that these words, plunging at once into the midst of things, are a model of how a story should begin. Some one laughingly suggested that he should begin a novel in that way; and Tolstóy at once started on *Anna Karénina*, the second sentence, and first narrative sentence, of which is, 'Everything was upset in the Oblónskys' house'.

In May, Tolstóy and his whole family went for a three months' visit to Samára, where he had recently purchased some more land.

This summer he hired a Bashkír named Mouhamed Shah, who owned and brought with him a herd of

milking mares. This Mouhamed Shah was polite, punctual, and dignified. He had a workman to drive the herd, and a wife (who retired behind a curtain in his *kochévka* when visitors came to see him) to wait upon him. In subsequent years this worthy man repeatedly resumed his engagement with the Tolstóys.

This was the first year the whole estate had been ploughed up and sown. It was fortunate for the district that some one who had the ear of the public happened to be there, for the crops in the whole neighbourhood failed utterly, and a famine ensued. So out-of-the-world were the people and so cut off from civilization, that they might have suffered and died without the rest of Russia hearing anything about it, had not Tolstóy been at hand to make their plight known in good time by an appeal for help, which the Countess prompted him to draw up and which appeared on 17th August, in the *Moscow Védomosti*.

In this article on the Samára Famine, Tolstóy describes how the complete failure of the harvest, following as it did on two previous poor harvests, had brought nearly nine-tenths of the population to destitution and hunger.

To ascertain the real state of things Tolstóy took an inventory at every tenth house in the village of Gavrílovka—the one nearest his estate; and of the twenty-three families so examined, all but one were found to be in debt, and none of them knew how they were to get through the winter. Most of the men had left home to seek for work, but the harvest being bad everywhere and so many being in search of work, the price of labour had fallen to one-eighth of its usual amount.

Tolstóy visited several villages and found a similar state of things everywhere. Together with his article he sent 100 rubles as a first subscription to a Famine Fund. This was only a small part of what he spent in relief of the impoverished peasants, for when Prugávin (well known for his valuable descriptions of Russian sects) visited the district in 1881, many of the inhabitants

told him of Tolstóy's personal kindness to the afflicted, and of his gifts of corn and money during the famine.

The subscription proved a success. Tolstóy's aunt, Countess A. A. Tolstáya, mentioned the matter to the Empress, who was one of the first to contribute. Her example was largely followed, and altogether in money and in kind something like 2,000,000 rubles was contributed during 1873-4. Within a year or two, good harvests again completely changed the whole appearance of the district.

This was the first, but neither the last nor the worst, of the famines in which Tolstóy rendered help.

Before the end of August 1873 he was back at Yásnaya.

A month later he wrote to Fet, referring to Kramskóy's portrait of himself, in the blouse which even in those days he wore when at home instead of a tailor-made coat:

25 September 1873.

I am beginning to write. . . . The children are learning; my wife is busy and teaches. Every day for a week Kramskóy has been painting my portrait for Tretyakóv's Gallery, and I sit and chat with him and try to convert him from the Petersburg faith to the faith of the baptized. I agreed to this because Kramskóy came personally and offered to paint a second portrait for us very cheaply, and because my wife persuaded me.

Up to that time Tolstóy, sensitive as to his personal appearance, and instinctively disliking any personal advertisement, had always objected to having his portrait painted, and if he ever allowed himself to be photographed, had been careful to have the negative destroyed that copies might not be multiplied. This prejudice he abandoned in later life; and after Kramskóy had broken the ice, portraits and photographs of Tolstóy became more and more common.

Kramskóy's acquaintance with him came about in this way. He was commissioned to paint a portrait of the great novelist for the collection of famous Russians in Tretyakóv's picture gallery in Moscow, but sought in

vain in that town for his photograph and was too modest to ask Tolstóy (who, he knew, was living a secluded life at Yásnaya) to give him sittings. He therefore hired a country house some three miles from Yásnaya, with the intention of painting Tolstóy who often rode past there on horseback. His intention however became known, and the Tolstóys at once sent him a friendly invitation to visit them. Of the two very similar portraits which Kramskóy painted, one remained at Yásnaya.

Before Tolstóy's next letter to Fet, the angel of death had crossed the threshold of his house for the first time in his married life. On 11th November he wrote:

We are in trouble: Peter, our youngest, fell ill with croup and died in two days. It is the first death in our family in eleven years, and my wife feels it very deeply. One may console oneself by saying that if one had to choose one of our eight, this loss is lighter than any other would have been, but the heart, especially the mother's heart—that wonderful and highest manifestation of Divinity on earth—does not reason, and my wife grieves.

During the whole of 1874 Tolstóy made strenuous efforts to get his system of education generally
1874 adopted. On 15th January, overcoming his dislike of speaking in public, he addressed the Moscow Society of Literacy on the best way to teach children to read. The details of his argument need not detain us, as it will fall to the lot of few readers of this book to teach Russian children to read Russian; but briefly, the German *Lautier-methode* had been adopted by Russian pedagogues in a way Tolstóy considered arbitrary and pedantic, and his appeal was against that method.

The large hall in which the meeting took place was crowded. The President of the Society, Mr. Shatilov, invited Tolstóy to open the debate, but Tolstóy preferred to reply to questions and remarks other speakers might put. In the course of the animated proceedings, in which several men prominent in the Russian educational world took part, the discussion widened out till it covered the question of the whole direction of elementary education;

and Tolstóy, from the standpoint of his belief that it is harmful to force upon the people a culture they do not desire and are not prepared for—and much of which, though considered by us to be science, may yet turn out to be no better than the alchemy and astrology of the Middle Ages—denounced the education forced on the children in elementary schools, and declared that it should in the first place be confined to teaching the Russian language and arithmetic, leaving natural science and history alone. To prove the advantage of his way of teaching reading, Tolstóy offered to give a practical demonstration in one of the schools attached to the Moscow factories. This was done, with the result that the Society of Literacy decided to start two temporary schools for the express purpose of testing the rival methods during a period of seven weeks. The one school was taught by an expert in the *Lautiermethode*, while in the other school Tolstóy's method was taught by a teacher from one of the schools near Yásnaya. After seven weeks the children were examined by a committee, but the members of the committee disagreed and handed in contradictory reports. At the meeting of the Society there was again a great divergence of opinion, and Tolstóy, who considered that the test had not been made under proper conditions (most of the pupils being too young, and the constant presence of visitors having prevented the teacher from holding the children's attention), but that his method had nevertheless shown its superiority, decided to appeal to a wider public and did so by publishing a letter addressed to Shatílov.

An account of what happened from the time the dispute passed into the press has been given by the popular critic and essayist, N. K. Mihaylóvski, a colleague of Nekrásov who was at that time editing the *Fatherland Journal*. Tolstóy, who had long dropped out of touch with Nekrásov, now asked him to let the *Fatherland Journal* take a hand in his fight with the pedagogic specialists, and to interest a wider public in his educational reforms. As an inducement he held out a prospect (never

fulfilled) that he would contribute some works of fiction to their magazine. The outcome of his correspondence was that a long article by Tolstóy (his letter to Shatílov) appeared in the September number, under the title of *On the Education of the People*.

Tolstóy's educational articles in 1862, when he had issued them in his own magazine, had fallen flat and attracted no attention, but this article, by the author of *War and Peace* in a leading Petersburg magazine, though expressing similar views, received much attention and was criticized, favourably or adversely, in many other publications. Though his views were only adopted to a small extent, the shock he administered to the professional pedagogues who looked on school-children as 'a flock existing for the sake of its shepherds', had a most healthy influence, and its immediate effect was indicated by the rejection from the Moscow Teachers' Seminary of one of the text-books Tolstóy most fiercely attacked.

Following on the storm raised by this article, Mihaylówski, in the *Fatherland Journal* for January 1875, published a long article entitled *An Outsider's Notes*, in which he took Tolstóy's part against the pedagogues, and said: 'Though I am one of the profane in philosophy and pedagogics, and am writing simply a *feuilleton*, yet I advise my readers to peruse this *feuilleton* with great attention, not for my sake but for Tolstóy's, and for the sake of those fine shades of thought on which I merely comment.'

Before this, however, Tolstóy had made another attempt to improve the state of elementary education, by promoting the establishment of that 'University in bark shoes' already alluded to.

He had found some of the boys in the Yásno-Polyána school anxious to continue their studies after finishing the school course, and an experiment in teaching them algebra had been very successful.

In his last article on Education he had pointed out that a great obstacle to the spread of efficient elementary

instruction lay in the fact that the peasants could not afford the salaries (modest as these were) demanded by Russian teachers who were not peasants. It was therefore natural that he should devise a scheme for preparing teachers from among the peasants themselves; and he drew up a project for a training college to be established at Yásnaya under his own direction and control.

In the summer of this year he paid a brief visit to his Samára estate to look after its management, and took his son Sergéy with him.

On 20th November 1874 the Countess wrote to her brother:

Our usual serious winter work is now in full swing. Leo is quite taken up with popular education, schools, and colleges for teachers, where teachers for the peasants' schools are to be trained. All this keeps him busy from morning to night. I have my doubts about all this. I am sorry his strength should be spent on these things instead of on writing a novel; and I don't know in how far it will be of use, since all this activity will extend only to one small corner of Russia.

P. F. Samárin, the Marshal of the nobility of Túla Government, backed Tolstóy cordially and pointed out that the Zémstvo (County Council) had a sum of 30,000 rubles available for educational purposes, and that this might be devoted to starting a teacher's Training College. To attain this end Tolstóy, who heretofore had always refused to stand for election, consented to enter the Zémstvo, and after being returned to that body, was unanimously chosen to serve on its Education Committee.

He presented a report in the sense indicated above, which was at first favourably discussed; but one of the elder members rose, and alluding to the fact that a collection was being made all over Russia for a monument to Catherine the Great, and that it was the centenary year of the decree by which she had created the Government of Túla, proposed that the money should be devoted to a monument of their benefactress. This loyal sentiment met with approval, and though Tolstóy

did not at once abandon his plan, the means to carry it out were not forthcoming and we do not hear much more of it.

If one did not know how stupidly reactionary the governing classes of Russia were at this period, it would seem extraordinary that the central and the local authorities alike should have so constantly balked and hindered Tolstóy's disinterested projects: forbidding the publication of his newspaper for soldiers, mutilating his stories, sending gendarmes to search his schools, looking askance at his school magazine, and defeating his project for a Training College. Can it be wondered at that he came more and more to identify Government with all that is most opposed to enlightenment? We know that similar causes were at that very time driving men and women of a younger generation to undertake dangerous propaganda among factory workmen and country peasants, in more or less definite opposition to the existing order of society.

His devotion to educational matters did not entirely supersede, though no doubt it delayed, his activity as a novelist. In the spring of 1874 he had taken the commencement of *Anna Karénina* to Moscow, but for some reason none of it appeared that year.

Turgénev, in collaboration with Madame Viardot, was at this time translating some of Tolstóy's stories into French. Writing to Fet in March 1874 he says:

The season is now almost over, but all the same I will try to place his [Tolstóy's] *Three Deaths* in the *Revue des Deux Mondes* or in the *Temps*, and in the autumn I will without fail get out *The Cossacks*. The more often I read that story the more convinced I am that it is the *chef d'œuvre* of Tolstóy and of all Russian narrative literature.

Meanwhile life and death pursued their course. In April a son was born and christened Nicholas; and soon death, having a few months previously taken the youngest, returned to claim the oldest members of the household. The first of them to go was his dearly loved Auntie Tatiána Alexándrovna, to whose good influence through

out life he owed so much. She died on 20th June, and next year his other aunt followed her.

Tolstóy never refers to his Aunt Tatiána without letting us see how he cherishes her memory. Here, for instance, are one or two of his notes relating to her:

When already beginning to grow feeble, having waited her opportunity, one day when I was in her room she said to us turning away (I saw that she was ready to cry), 'Look here, *mes chers amis*, my room is a good one and you will want it. If I die in it,' and her voice trembled, 'the recollection will be unpleasant to you; so move me somewhere else, that I may not die here'. Such she always was from my earliest childhood, before I was able to understand her goodness.

Again referring to her death, and to the love for his father which had played so large a part in her life, he adds:

She died peacefully, gradually falling asleep; and died as she desired, not in the room that had been hers, lest it should be spoilt for us.

She died recognizing hardly any one. But me she always recognized, smiling and lighting up as an electric lamp does when one touches the switch, and sometimes she moved her lips trying to pronounce the name Nicholas: thus in death completely and inseparably uniting me with him she had loved all her life.

When her coffin was carried through the village, there was not one hut out of the sixty in Yásnaya Polyána from which the people did not come out asking to have the procession stopped and a requiem sung for her soul. 'She was a kind lady and did nobody any harm,' said they. Tolstóy adds:

On that account they loved her, and loved her very much. Lao-Tsze says things are valuable for what is not in them. So it is with a life. It is most valuable if there is nothing bad in it, and in the life of Tatiána Alexándrovna there was nothing bad.

Except in the case of his brother Nicholas, Tolstóy was usually not greatly upset even by the deaths of

those near and dear to him. The following letter to Fet shows how he took Tatiána's death:

24 June 1874.

Two days ago we buried Tatiána Alexándrovna. She died slowly and gradually, and I had grown accustomed to the process; yet her death was, as the death of a near and dear one always is, a quite new, isolated, and unexpectedly stirring event. The others are well, and our house is full. The delightful heat, the bathing and the fruit have brought me to the state of mental laziness I love, with only enough mental life remaining to enable me to remember my friends and think of them.

The next letter, dated 22nd October, tells its own tale:

Dear Afanásy Afanásyevich,—I have planned to buy, and must buy, some land at Nikólskoe, and for that purpose must borrow 10,000 rubles for one year on mortgage. It may be that you have money you want to place. If so, write to Iván Ivánovich Orlóv, Nikólskoe village, and he will arrange the affair with you independently of our relations to one another. . . . How gladly would I come to see you, were I not so overwhelmed with the school, family, and estate business, that I have not even time to go out shooting. . . . I hope to be free when winter comes.

A small second edition of Tolstóy's *ABC Book*, in twelve paper-bound parts, was printed this year; but he did not yet feel quite satisfied with that work and towards the close of the year revised it, abbreviating, omitting the arithmetic, and introducing graduated reading exercises. A *New ABC Book*, apart from the more advanced *Readers*, and consisting of ninety-two pages of elementary matter, was issued in 1875, at a very low price. Between one and two million copies of it have since been sold. The reading matter from his first *ABC Book* was subsequently graded into four cheap *Readers* costing 3*d.* to 4*d.* each, and though they were not recognized by the Ministry of Education, they have from that time to this circulated in large quantities being printed of late years in edition after edition of 50,000 at a time.

The Countess in general enjoyed good health and bore the cares of her large family lightly; but during the winter

of 1874-5 her condition caused her husband much concern. In January he was able to write to Fet, 'I have ceased to fear for my wife's health'; but in fact for some time longer she continued to ail.

The commencement of *Anna Karénina* appeared in the first four monthly numbers of the *Russian Messenger* for 1875.

In February the baby, Nicholas, died of inflammation of the brain, and on 4th March 1875¹ Tolstóy wrote to Fet:

We have one grief after another; you and Márya Petrónva will certainly be sorry for us, especially for Sónya. Our youngest son, ten months old, fell ill three weeks ago with the dreadful illness called 'water on the brain', and after three weeks' terrible torture died three days ago, and we buried him to-day. I feel it hard through my wife, but for her, who was nursing him herself, it is very hard.

In the same letter he mentions *Anna Karénina*, and immediately afterwards makes allusion to the first idea of his *Confession*, which was not actually written till 1879:

It pleases me very much that you praise Karénina and I hear that she gets praised, but assuredly never was writer so indifferent to his success as I am!

On the one hand I am preoccupied with the school affairs, and on the other, strange to say, with the subject of a new work which took possession of me just at the worst time of the boy's illness, and with that illness itself and death. . . .

This summer the whole Tolstóy family went to the Samára estates, which had already been considerably increased by the last purchase and ultimately exceeded 16,000 acres. Mouhamed Shah with his herd of mares and his *kochévka*—which Tolstóy called 'our saloon'—again appeared on the scene. A second *kochévka* was set up for the use of the Tolstóys themselves, and was so much in favour that all the members of the family were eager to occupy it.

The novelty and the peculiarities of steppe farming

¹ This letter evidently relates to the year 1875, though in Fet's *Recollections* it is given as belonging to 1874.

interested Tolstóy, and he as well as other members of his household took an active part in harvesting and winnowing. How primitive were the Samára methods of agriculture may be shown by mentioning their manner of threshing. A ring of horses was formed tied head to tail. In the centre of the ring stood a driver with a long lash, and the horses were set trotting round a corresponding circle of sheaves, out of which they trod the grain.

The virgin soil was ploughed up by five or even six pair of oxen, wearing round their necks deep-toned bells, sounding in a minor key. These things, together with the pipes of the boys who watched the herds, the sultry days, and the marvellously clear moonlit nights, had a wonderful charm for the whole party, which was increased by Tolstóy's capacity to notice and direct attention to whatever was interesting or beautiful.

The whole family became interested, Behrs tells us, in their new farming, and some of them went with Tolstóy as far afield as Orenbourg to purchase cattle and horses.

He bought about a hundred Bashkír mares and crossed them with an English trotter and with horses of other breeds, hoping to obtain a good new type.

One evening his whole herd and Mouhamed Shah's as well, were very nearly stolen by some Kirghiz nomads. The invaders were, however, pursued and driven off by two mounted Bashkír labourers.

Tolstóy declared farming in Samára to be a game of chance. It cost nearly three times as much to plough up the land, sow it, and gather in a harvest, as it did to purchase the freehold of the estate; and if during May and June there was not at least one good fall of rain, everything perished; whereas if it rained several times the harvest yielded thirty- to forty-fold.

One day, at harvest time, a poor wandering Tartar drawing two little children in a tiny cart, came up to the balcony on which the Tolstóys were sitting, and begged to be hired as a labourer. He was allowed to

set up his wigwam in a field close by, and the Tolstóy children used to go there every day to feed the little Tartars.

In the neighbouring village several well-to-do Russian peasants lived, with whom Tolstóy was on very good terms. Either because they were economically independent and lived in a province where serfdom had not prevailed, or as a result of Tolstóy's tact and ability to set people at their ease, these peasants always behaved with dignity and self-respect. They shook hands when they said 'How do you do?' and seemed quite at home with the Count.

He used to notice with pleasure the good relations and complete religious toleration that existed in those parts between the Orthodox peasants and their Mohammedan neighbours; and he was also delighted that the priest at Pátrovka was on friendly terms with the Molokáns he was trying to convert.

One rainy night, after staying late at this priest's house, Tolstóy and his brother-in-law completely lost their way. It was so dark that they could not see their horses' heads. Behrs was riding an old working horse which kept pulling to the left. Tolstóy, on hearing this, told him to let the horse follow its bent. Behrs therefore tied his reins so that they hung loose, and wrapping himself from the drenching rain in his cloak, allowed the horse to go where it liked. Carefully avoiding the ploughed land, it soon brought them out on to the road and, curiously enough, to just the part of it which was distinguishable from the extraordinary sameness of the rest, so that the riders knew where they were.

The most striking event of this year's stay in Samára was a horse race arranged by Tolstóy. Mouhamed Shah was authorized to announce to the peasants and neighbours that races would be held on the Count's estate, and invitations were sent to all likely to take part. Bashkírs and Kirghíz assembled, bringing with them tents, portable copper boilers, plenty of *kumýs*, and even sheep. Ural Cossacks and Russian peasants also came from the

whole surrounding neighbourhood. In preparation for the race, says Behrs:

We ourselves chose a level place, measured out a huge circle three miles in circumference, marked it by running a plough round, and set up posts. Sheep, and even a horse, were prepared with which to regale the visitors. By the appointed day some thousands of people had collected. On the wild steppe covered with feather grass a row of tents appeared, and soon a motley crowd enlivened it. On the conical hillocks (locally called 'cones') felt and other carpets were spread on which the Bashkírs sat in circles, their legs tucked under them. In the centre of the circle a young Bashkír poured *kumýs* out of a large *tursuk* [a leather bottle made of an animal's leg], handing the cup to each of the company in turn. Their songs and the tunes played on their pipes and reeds sounded somewhat dreary to a European ear. Wrestling, at which the Bashkírs are particularly skilful, could be seen here and there. Thirty trained horses were entered for the chief race. The riders were boys of about ten years, who rode without saddles.

This race was for thirty-three miles, and it took exactly an hour and forty minutes; consequently it was run at the rate of three minutes a mile. Of the thirty horses, ten ran the whole distance, the others giving up. The principal prizes were a horse, an ox, a gun, a gold watch and several many-coloured silk gowns, such as the Tartars wear. The festival lasted two days, and passed off in perfect order and very gaily. To Tolstóy's delight no police were present. The guests all politely thanked their host and departed highly satisfied. 'Even in the crowd', says Behrs, 'it seemed to me that Leo Nikoláevich knew how to evoke *entrain* combined with respect for good order.'

Readers of Tolstóy's short stories will be aware of the use to which he subsequently put his knowledge of the Bashkírs and of a hermit he met in those parts.

On 26th August, after reaching Yásnaya, he wrote to Fet:

Two days ago we arrived home safely. . . .

We have had an average harvest, but the price of labour

has been enormous, so that finally ends only just meet. For two months I have not soiled my hands with ink nor my heart with thoughts. Now I am settling down again to dull, commonplace *Anna Karénina*, with the sole desire to clear a space quickly and obtain leisure for other occupations—only not for the educational work I love but wish to abandon. It takes too much time.

His Samára experiences confirmed in him the feeling that not the civilization and progress and political struggles of the Western World and of the small Westernized section of Russians were really important, but the great primitive struggle of plain people to obtain a subsistence in healthy natural conditions, and he adds in the same letter:

Why fate took me there [to Samára] I do not know; but I know that I have listened to speeches in the English Parliament, which is considered very important, and it seemed to me dull and insignificant; but there are flies, dirt, and Bashkír peasants, and I, watching them with intense respect and anxiety, became absorbed in listening to them and watching them and felt it all to be very important.

One must live as we lived, in a healthy out-of-the-way part of Samára, and see the struggle going on before one's eyes of the nomadic life (of millions of people on an immense territory) with the primitive agricultural life, to realize all the importance of that struggle.

After their return from the Government of Samára all the children had whooping-cough. The Countess caught it from them and, being in the sixth month of pregnancy, was very ill. This resulted in the premature birth of a girl, who lived less than two hours.

Tolstóy's eldest son, Sergéy, had now reached the age of twelve. Besides their English governess and a Swiss lady, the children had at different times a Swiss, a Frenchman, and a German, as tutors for modern languages. Tutors and students who acted as tutors also lodged at Yásnaya and taught other subjects. A music master came over from Túla. The eldest boy had considerable musical talent and the family as a whole were

musical. As soon as they had mastered their finger exercises the Count insisted on their at once being allowed to learn serious pieces.

Every effort was made to awaken and foster the talent for drawing and painting which some of the children, and especially the eldest daughter, Tatiána, possessed, but lessons in these subjects were given only to those who showed real capacity for them.

Much as Tolstóy disliked the curriculum of the Grammar Schools ('Gymnasiums' as they were called in Russia), he did not wish to make it impossible for his sons to enter the University and they followed the usual classical course. Sergéy passed his examinations each year in Túla Gymnasium, being carefully coached at home.

In his *Recollections* Behrs tells us of Tolstóy's enlivening influence in the family:

I cannot sufficiently describe the joyous and happy frame of mind that usually reigned at Yásnaya Polyána. Its source was always Leo Nikoláevich. In conversation about abstract questions, about the education of children, about outside matters—his opinion was always most interesting. When playing croquet, or during our walks, he enlivened us all by his humour and his participation, taking a real part in the game or the walk.

With me, he liked to mow or to rake, to do gymnastics to race, and occasionally to play leap-frog or *gorodki* [a game in which a stick is thrown at some shorter sticks placed in a pattern], &c. Though far inferior to him in strength, for he could lift 180 lb. with one hand, I could easily match him in a race, but seldom passed him for I was always laughing. That mood accompanied all our exercises. Whenever we happened to pass where mowers were at work, he would go up to them and borrow a scythe from the one who seemed most tired. I of course followed his example. He would then ask me: Why we, with well-developed muscles, cannot mow six days on end, though a peasant does it on rye-bread and sleeping on damp earth? 'You just try to do it under such conditions,' he would add in conclusion. When leaving the meadow, he would take a handful of hay from the haystack and sniff it, keenly enjoying its smell.

Children and grown-ups alike played croquet at Yásnaya. The game generally began after dinner in the evening and only finished by candlelight. Behrs says that, having played it with Tolstóy, he considers croquet to be a game of chance. Tolstóy's commendation of a good shot always pleased the player and aroused the emulation of his opponents. The kindly irony of his comments on a miss also acted as a spur. A simple word from him, uttered just at the right moment and in the right tone, produced that *entrain* which makes any occupation interesting and infects all who come under its influence.

The sincerity of Tolstóy's nature showed itself in the frank expression of his passing mood. If, when driving to the station he saw that they had missed the train, he would exclaim, 'Ach! we've missed it!' with such intensity that every one within earshot would first feel as though a calamity had occurred, and would then join in the hearty laughter which his own vehemence evoked in Tolstóy. It was the same when he made a bad miss at croquet, and also if, when sitting at home, he suddenly remembered some engagement he had forgotten. If, as sometimes happened, his exclamation alarmed his wife, he would half-jokingly add, like a scolded child, 'I'll never do it again!'

His laughter, which began on a high note, had something wonderfully infectious about it. His head would hang over on one side and his whole body would shake.

His good-natured irony constantly acted as a stimulant to those about him. If for instance some one was in the dumps about the weather, Tolstóy would say: 'Is your weather behaving badly?'

When he felt it wise to reject an extra cigar, or a second helping of some favourite dish, he would remark to those present: 'Wait till I am grown up, then I will have two helpings,' or 'two cigars', as the case might be.

'If', says Behrs, 'he noticed any of the children making a wry or affected face, he generally called out, "Now then, no grimacing, you'll only spoil your phiz".'

Behrs also tells us that:

What he called 'the Numidian cavalry' evoked our noisiest applause. He would unexpectedly spring up from his place and, raising one arm in the air with its hand hanging quite loose from the wrist, he would run lightly through the rooms. All the children and sometimes the grown-ups also would follow his example with the same suddenness.

Tolstóy read aloud very well, and would often read to the family or to visitors.

His contempt for doctors and medicine is plainly indicated both in *War and Peace* and *Anna Karénina*. Like Rousseau he considered that the practice of medicine should be general and not confined to one profession, and this opinion inclined him to approve of the folk-remedies used by the peasants. But he did not go the length of refusing to call in a doctor when one of the family was seriously ill.

Before the year closed, his aunt, Pelagéya Ilýnishna Yúshkov, with whom he had lived in his young days in Kazán, also passed away. She had been separated from her husband before his death in 1869 and for a long time had not even seen him, though they remained quite friendly towards one another. She was very religious in an Orthodox Church way, and after her husband's death retired to the Óptina nunnery. Subsequently she moved to the Túla nunnery, but arranged to spend much of her time at Yásnaya, where in her eightieth year she fell ill and died. She was in general a good-tempered though not a clever woman, and all her life long strictly observed the ceremonies of the Church and thought that she firmly believed its teaching about redemption and resurrection, yet she was so afraid of death that on her death-bed she was reluctant to receive the eucharist because it brought home to her the fact that she was dying; and her suffering at the fear of death caused her to become irritable with all about her.

A servant, Sergéy Arbúzov, who lived in the house at the time, tells us that while at Yásnaya, Pelagéya used on the first of each month to send for a priest. As

soon as he arrived and began the usual ceremony of blessing with holy water, Tolstóy would escape and hide himself. Not till the gardener, Semën—whom he used to send into the conservatory to reconnoitre—brought word that the priest had gone, would Tolstóy reappear.

About that time, however, his attitude towards Church ceremonies altered. His servant (who saw only the external signs of the complex inner struggle that went on in Tolstóy) tells us:

Suddenly a wonderful change came over him, of which I was a witness. In 1875 a priest, Vasíly Ivánovich, from the Túla Seminary, used to come to teach theology to Tolstóy's children. At first, Leo Nikoláevich hardly ever talked to him, but once a snowstorm obliged Vasíly Ivánovich to stop the night at our house. The Count began a conversation with him and they did not go to bed till daylight. They talked the whole night.

From that day Leo Nikoláevich became very thoughtful and always talked with Vasíly Ivánovich. When Lent came round, the Count got up one morning and said, 'I am going to do my devotions and prepare to receive communion. You can go back to bed, but first tell the coachman not to get up. I will saddle Kalmýk (his favourite horse at that time) myself. Forgive me, Sergéy, if I have ever offended you!' and he went off to church.

From that day, for a couple of years, he always went to church, seldom missing a Sunday. The whole village was surprised, and asked, 'What has the priest told the Count, that has suddenly made him so fond of church-going?'

It used to happen that the Count would come into my hut when I was teaching my little boy religion.

'What are you teaching him?' he would ask.

And I used to say, 'To pray.'

'Ah!' said he, 'that is right. A man who does not pray to God is not a real man.'

The publication of *Anna Karénina* was renewed in the first four numbers of the *Russian Messenger* for 1876. On 1st March Tolstóy writes to Fet:

Things are not yet right with us. My wife does not get over her last illness, coughs, grows thin, and first has fever and then headaches. And therefore the house lacks well-being and I lack mental tranquillity, which I particularly need now for

my work. The end of winter and beginning of spring is always my chief time for work, and I must finish my novel, which now wearies me. . . . I always hope a tooth will come loose in your jaw, or in your thrashing machine, and cause you to go to Moscow. Then I shall spin a cobweb at Kozlówka [the nearest station to Yásnaya] and catch you.

In April Fet wrote to say that he had been seriously ill, had thought he was dying, and 'wished to call you to see how I departed'. On 29th April Tolstóy replies in a letter, notable as giving us a glimpse of the progress he had made in the fierce five-year inner struggle with doubt which preceded the production of his *Confession*.

I am grateful to you for thinking of calling me to see your departure, when you supposed it near. I will do the same when I get ready to go *thither*, if I am able to think. No one will be so necessary to me at that moment as you and my brother. When death draws near, intercourse with people who in this life look beyond its bounds is precious and cheering; and you and those rare *real* people I have met in life always stand on the very verge and see clearly, just because they look now at Nirvana—the illimitable, the unknown—and now at Sansara; and that glance at Nirvana strengthens their sight. But worldly people, however much they may talk about God, are unpleasant to you and me and must be a torment when one is dying, for they do not see what we see, namely the God who 'is more indefinite and distant, but loftier and more indubitable', as was said in your article.

You are ill and think of death, and I am alive and do not cease thinking of and preparing for the same thing. . . . Much that I have thought, I have tried to express in the last chapter of the April number of the *Russian Messenger* [*Anna Karénina* Part V, Chap. XX].

The passage referred to, telling of the death of Lévin's brother, is evidently based on that of Tolstóy's own brother Dmítri; and many other characters in *Anna Karénina* are also drawn more or less closely from life. For instance, Agáfya Miháylovna, the servant, was a real person and that was her real name. She died at Yásnaya only a few years ago. Yásnaya Polyána itself in many of its details, is also described in the novel.

On 12th May Tolstóy again writes to Fet:

It is already five days since I received the horse, and every day I prepare, but never make time, to write to you. Here the spring and summer life has begun and our house is full of guests and of bustle. This summer life seems to me like a dream: it contains some slight remains of my real, winter life, but consists chiefly of visions, now pleasant and now unpleasant, from some absurd world not ruled by sane sense. Among these visions came your beautiful stallion. I am very much obliged to you for it. Where am I to send the money to? . . .

An event which occupies me very much at present is Sergéy's examination, which begins on the 27th. . . . What a terrible summer! Here it is dreadful and mournful to look at the wood, especially at the young trees. They have all perished.

On 18th May he wrote again:

I have been slow in answering your long and cordial letter because I have been unwell and dispirited as I still am, but I will write at least a few lines. Our house is full of people: my niece Nagórny with two children, the Kuzmínskis with four children; and Sónya [his wife] is still poorly, and I dejected and dull-minded. Our one hope was for good weather and that we have not got. As you and I resemble one another, you must know the condition in which one feels oneself to be, now a God from whom nothing is hid and now stupider than a horse. In that state I am at present. So do not be exacting. Till next letter, Yours,

L. TOLSTÓY.

The Kuzmínskis referred to above were Tánya, her husband, and their family. They spent every summer at Yásnaya, in the annexe.

Passing into his 'summer condition', Tolstóy's attention to *Anna Karénina* slackened, but before the end of the year he set energetically to work to finish it. The interest aroused by the book was extreme, and it is said that Moscow ladies used to send to the printers to try to find out what the continuation would be.

On 21st July Tolstóy writes inviting Fet's brother, Peter Afanásevich, a great lover of horses, to accompany him to Samára; and in the same letter which was

addressed to Fet he makes an allusion to the troubles of the Slavs in Turkey, where fighting had been going on for a twelvemonth between the Turks and Herzegovinians. Peter Afanásevich had gone as a volunteer, and had returned after the failure of the insurrection.

21 July 1876.

I am very much to blame, dear Afanásy Afanásevich, for having been so slow in writing to you. I prepare to write every day but cannot find time. . . . Strákhov was here a week ago, and we philosophized to the point of weariness. . . . I press the hand of Peter Afanásevich. I should like to hear his stories about Herzegovina, in the existence of which I do not believe!

I am arranging to go to Samára in September. If Peter Afanásevich has no plans for September, will not he go with me to see the Kirghíz and their horses? How jolly it would be!

Mention has already been made of the fact that Tolstóy, who understood horses very well, was at this time interested in horse-breeding as a source of revenue. To buy them he visited Orenbourg, where he met General Kryzhanóvski, a friend who had been one of his superior officers in Sevastopol and was now Governor-General of this northern Province. They spent the time very pleasantly together, recalling their past experiences.

To his wife, who had found it hard to consent to his absence, he wrote in September:

I know that it is hard for you and that you are afraid, but I saw the effort you made to control yourself and not to hinder me and, were it possible, I loved you yet more on that account. If only God grants you to spend the time well, healthily, energetically, and usefully! . . . Lord have mercy on me and on thee!

In a letter of 13th November Tolstóy writes to Fet:

Pity me for two things: (1) a good-for-nothing coachman took the stallions to Samára and, wishing to take a short cut, drowned Guneba in a bog within ten miles of the estate; (2) I sleep and cannot write; I despise myself for laziness and do not allow myself to take up any other work.

Twenty-eight years after the loss of Guneba, the

Countess, in speaking to me of her husband's qualities as a man of affairs, remarked that his schemes were very good, but that he generally spoilt them by lack of care in details. 'For instance,' she remarked, 'it was quite a good idea of his to send a very fine stallion which cost 2,000 rubles to our estate in Samára. There were no such horses in the district; but he must needs entrust it to a drunken Tartar who made away with it and said he had lost it.'

On 7th December 1876 Tolstóy wrote to Fet acknowledging a poem, 'Among the Stars', which the latter had sent him:

That poem is not only worthy of you, but is specially, specially good, with that philosophic-poetic character which I expect from you. It is excellent that it is said by the stars. . . . It is also good, as my wife remarked, that on the same sheet on which the poem is written, you pour out your grief that the price of kerosene has risen to 12 kopeks. That is an indirect but sure sign of a poet.

The reader is already aware of Tolstóy's devotion to music. Though at times it was crowded out of his life by other interests, he always returned to it with ardour when opportunity offered. Behrs tells us that generally, when playing, Tolstóy chose serious music.

He often sat down to the piano before beginning to work. . . . He always accompanied my youngest sister [Tánya] and enjoyed her singing very much. I noticed that the sensation music evoked in him expressed itself by a slight pallor and a scarcely perceptible grimace, suggestive of something like terror. Hardly a day passed in summer without my sister singing and without the piano being played. Occasionally we all sang together, and he always played the accompaniments.

As Tolstóy's spiritual crisis approached, the attraction of music for him seemed to increase, and in December 1876 he made acquaintance with the composer Chaykóvski, who had held the post of Director of the Moscow Conservatoire, the first seeds of which Tolstóy had helped to plant nearly twenty years before.

Chaykóvski had from his youth up been a devoted admirer of Tolstóy, whose skill in reading the human heart appeared to him almost superhuman. He was therefore highly gratified when of his own accord Tolstóy sought his acquaintance. At first their intercourse did not appear to lessen the composer's reverence, for on 23rd December 1876 he wrote to a friend:

Count L. N. Tolstóy spent some time here recently. He visited me several times and spent two whole evenings with me. I am tremendously flattered, and proud of the interest I have inspired in him, and for my part am completely enchanted by his ideal personality.

Chaykóvski induced Nicholas Rubinstein, then Director of the Moscow Conservatoire, to arrange a musical evening for Tolstóy's sole benefit; and at this concert, Rubinstein, Fitzenhagen, and Adolph Bródsky (who is now Principal of the Manchester College of Music) were among the chief performers.

One of the pieces performed was Chaykóvski's 'Andante in D Major', which so affected Tolstóy that he wept. 'Never, perhaps, in my life', says Chaykóvski, 'was I so flattered, or my vanity as a composer so touched, as when Leo Nikoláevich, sitting next to me and listening to the quartet performing my Andante, burst into tears.'

After Tolstóy had returned to Yásnaya he wrote to Chaykóvski, sending him a collection of folk-songs, and saying:

I send you the songs, dear Peter Ilých. I have again looked them through. They will be a wonderful treasure in your hands. But for God's sake work them up and use them in a Mozart-Haydn style, and not in a Beethoven-Schumann-Berlioz, artificial way, seeking the unexpected. How much I left unsaid to you! I really said nothing of what I wanted to say. There was no time. I was enjoying myself. This last stay of mine in Moscow will remain one of the best of my reminiscences. Never have I received so precious a reward for my literary labours as on that wonderful evening.

Chaykóvski replied:

Count, I am sincerely grateful to you for sending the songs.

I must tell you candidly that they have been taken down by an unskilful hand, and bear only traces of their pristine beauty.

The chief defect is that they have been artificially squeezed and forced into a regular, measured form. Only Russian dance music has a rhythm and a regular and equally accented beat; but folk-ballads have of course nothing in common with dance songs. Moreover most of these songs are, arbitrarily it seems, written in a solemn D major, which again does not suit a real Russian song that almost always has an indefinite tonality approximating closest of all to ancient Church music. In general, the songs you have sent me cannot be worked up in a regular and systematic way: that is to say, one cannot make a collection of them, because for that they would have to be taken down as nearly as possible in the way in which the people perform them. That is an extremely difficult thing, demanding fine musical feeling and great historico-musical erudition. Except Balakírev, and to some extent Prokúnin, I do not know any one competent for the task. But as material for symphonic treatment your songs can be of use, and are even very good material, of which I certainly will avail myself in one way or other.

The intercourse between these two men, each so great in his own field and each such an admirer of the other's genius, was however not continued.

Chaykóvski's expectations had been pitched too high, and he felt a certain disappointment that his 'demigod' was, after all, but human. He had dreaded to meet the novelist lest the latter should penetrate the secret recesses of his soul; but, says Chaykóvski:

He who in his writings was the deepest of heart-seers, proved in personal contact to be a man of simple, whole, and frank nature, showing very little of the omniscience I had feared. . . . It was plain he did not at all regard me as a subject for his observation, but simply wanted to chat about music, in which he was interested.

Tolstóy—who had boasted of not reading newspapers and had lived so detached from politics and the events of contemporary history—began at this time to feel keenly interested in a question of foreign policy.

Following the insurrection in Herzegovina, another

had broken out in Bulgaria in May 1876, but had been quickly suppressed by the Turks, who burnt some sixty-five villages, the Bashi-Bazouks committing unspeakable atrocities on the defenceless inhabitants. At the commencement of July, Servia and Montenegro declared war on Turkey but, in spite of help rendered by Russian volunteers, they were quickly crushed by the Turks and would have been completely at their mercy had not Russia, on 31st October, issued an ultimatum demanding an armistice, which Turkey conceded. On 10th November Alexander II made a speech in the Moscow Krémlik, in which he declared that he would act independently of other powers unless satisfactory guarantees of reform were obtained from the Sultan forthwith. These events led up to the war which broke out between Russia and Turkey in April 1877.

Before this, however, in a letter of 13th November 1876, Tolstóy wrote to Fet:

I went to Moscow to hear about the war. This whole affair agitates me greatly. It is well for those to whom it is clear, but I am frightened when I reflect on the complexity of the conditions amid which history is made, and on how some Madame A.—with her vanity—becomes an indispensable cog in the machine!

Early in 1877 the Russo-Turkish imbroglio led to a split between Tolstóy and Katkóv. Tolstóy at bottom and in his own way was certainly a reformer, and his alliance with Katkóv, who was very reactionary, had always been rather like the yoking of an ox with an ass. At this time Katkóv was ardent for the liberation of the Slavs from Turkish tyranny, laudatory of those who volunteered for the war, and eager for the aggrandisement of Russia. Tolstóy, with his knowledge of the realities of war and insight into the motives that actuate those who fight, had his doubts about the heroic and self-sacrificing character of the volunteers and the purity of the patriotism of the press; and he expressed these doubts plainly in the concluding chapters of *Anna*

Karénina: as, for instance, where he makes Lévin say of 'the unanimity of the Press':

'That's been explained to me: as soon as there's a war their incomes are doubled. So how can they help believing in the destinies of the people, and the Slavonic races . . . and all the rest of it?'

The result was that when the final chapters of that novel were appearing in the *Russian Messenger*, during the first months of 1877, Katkóv returned some of it to Tolstóy with numerous corrections and a letter saying that he could not print it unless his corrections were accepted.

Tolstóy was furious that a journalist should dare to alter a word in his book, and sent a sharp reply to Katkóv, which resulted in a rupture. Tolstóy issued the last part of *Anna Karénina* not in the magazine but separately in book form, besides of course issuing the whole work in book form as usual; and Katkóv had to wind up the story as best he could by giving a brief summary of the concluding part.

These events throw light on the following letter to Fet:

23 March 1877.

You can't imagine how glad I am to have your approval of my writings, dear Afanásy Afanásevich, and in general to receive your letter. You write that the *Russian Messenger* has printed some one else's poem while your *Temptation* lies waiting. It is the dullest and deadest editorial office in existence. They have become terribly repulsive to me, not on my own account but for the sake of others. . . .

My head is now better, but as it gets better it has to work that much harder. March and the beginning of April are the months when I work most, and I still continue to be under the delusion that what I am writing is very important, though I know that in a month's time I shall be ashamed to remember that I thought so. Have you noticed that a new line has now been started, and that everybody is writing poetry: very bad poetry, but they all do it. Some five new poets have introduced themselves to me lately.

The dislike Tolstóy felt of the artificially stimulated

war fever (though, to do Katkóv and his friends justice, one must admit that Russia had much excuse for then intervening in defence of the Slav population of Turkey) was connected with the religious impulse that was beginning to reshape his life; but it does not appear that he actually disapproved of the war after Russia had officially commenced it. What he primarily objected to was that private individuals should push the Government into war.

An influence which has left its traces in the latter part of *Anna Karénina* (particularly Part VII, Chap. XXI) was Tolstóy's intercourse about this time with some of the most prominent followers of Lord Radstock, the ardent and persuasive Evangelical preacher, who frequently visited Russia and obtained considerable influence in certain aristocratic Petersburg circles. One of these people, Count A. P. Bóbrinski, who had been Minister of Ways of Communication, made Tolstóy's acquaintance and held animated religious discussions with him. Both Bóbrinski and Colonel Páshkov (another very prominent Radstockite) cherished hopes of winning Tolstóy over to Evangelical Christianity and making him the spokesman of their cause. Tolstóy, as the event proved, was quite capable of throwing himself wholeheartedly into a religious movement, but he needed a faith much more intelligible than the scheme of Redemption by the blood of Jesus: one that faced the facts of life, dealt explicitly with the bread-and-butter problem, and told men how to regard the fact that some people have to overtax their strength without ever reaching an assured maintenance, while others have a superabundance provided from birth without needing to do a stroke of work. His profound contempt for Evangelical doctrine flashed out twenty years later, in the 17th Chapter of Book II of *Resurrection*.

It was a little before this that Fet told Tolstóy the following story. Sauntering in a churchyard, he had come upon an epitaph which touched him more than any he had ever read. The tombstone was in the form

of an obelisk of plain grey sandstone. On one of its four sides were deeply cut the words:

Here is buried the body of the peasant girl Mary.

On another side:

Here also is buried an infant of the female sex.

On the side opposite the name of the deceased stood these words ill-spelt:

This, my dear, is the last adornment I can give thee
and below stood the name of

Retired non-commissioned officer So-and-so.

In his next letter Tolstóy writes:

18 October 1876.

This, my dear, is the last adornment I can give thee is charming! I have told it twice, and each time my voice has broken with tears.

In Tolstóy's next letter to Fet, dated 11th January, 1877 we get a glimpse of one of the reasons that led this strenuous worker to prefer a country life:

Dear Afanásy Afanásevich,—One does not strike or cut off the head that owns its fault! I confess I am quite at fault towards you. But truly in Moscow I am in a condition of irresponsibility; my nerves are out of order, the hours turn to minutes, and the people I do not want turn up as though on purpose and prevent my seeing those I do want.

Among the people whom Tolstóy, in his search for truth, did want to know, were some of the leading scientists of that day—a day when many men thought that Darwin had opened the gateway to a knowledge which would solve the mysteries of life and death, of the here and the hereafter. The great literary fame Tolstóy enjoyed made it easy for him to make such acquaintances.

One of the scientists he got to know was a celebrated professor of chemistry, A. M. Butleróv, whom to his amazement he found to be much concerned with table-turning and spiritualism, occupations Tolstóy at that time held in contempt.

A letter to Fet, dated 14th April, gives some inkling of what was going on in Tolstóy's mind:

I value every letter of yours, especially such as this last. You would hardly believe how pleased I am at what you write 'On the existence of the Deity'. I agree with it all and should like to say much about it, but cannot in a letter, and am too busy. It is the first time you have spoken to me about the Deity—God. And I have long been thinking unceasingly about that chief problem. Do not say that one cannot think about it! One not only can, but must! In all ages the best of the real people, have thought about it. And if we cannot think of it as they did, we must find out *how*. Have you read *Pensées de Pascal*—i.e. have you read it recently with a mature headpiece? When (which God grant) you come to see me we will talk of many things and I will give you that book. Were I free from my novel—of which the end is already in type and I am correcting the proofs—I would at once on receipt of your letter have come to you.

In the middle of this summer Tolstóy, bringing with him N. Strákhov, paid Fet an unexpected visit. The latter had at this time engaged as governess a Mlle. Oberländer, an excellent pianist, and in his *Recollections* he tells us that on this visit:

The Count, a sensitive æsthete by nature, was greatly taken by the piano playing of Mlle. Oberländer. He sat down to play duets with her, and they played through almost the whole of Beethoven.

Fet quotes Tolstóy's comment on the lady's performance:

When we were young, such pianists travelled across Europe giving concerts. She reads any piece of music as you read poetry, finding just the suitable expression for each note.

Towards the end of July, Tolstóy, accompanied by N. Strákhov, visited for the first time the Monastery of Óptina in the Kalúga Government, about 135 miles westwards of Yásnaya. A prominent figure in the monastic world at that time was the *Staretz* Father Ambrose, with whom Tolstóy had some long conversations. Among others whose acquaintance Tolstóy made

there was a monk who had formerly been an officer in the Horse Guards. One of the works Tolstóy left for publication after his death is a novel called *Father Sergius*, the hero of which is a man of the world who becomes a monk, acquires a reputation for sanctity, and then yields to temptation and ends as an outcast. His visits to the Óptina monastery, three times repeated, supplied Tolstóy with material which years later he utilized in that work.

A visit which greatly interested Tolstóy was paid him about this time by an itinerant story-teller, expert in folk-lore, wielding beautifully the simple language of the people, such as Tolstóy loved and has utilized in his stories. He took down some of this traveller's tales, and from them subsequently worked up into literary form *What Men Live By*, *The Three Hermits* (both included in *Twenty-three Tales*), and some others. The theme of *What Men Live By* is that of an angel sent by God to do penance on earth for a well-intentioned act of disobedience. It is one of the most widely disseminated of the world's legends and has appeared and reappeared in the literature of many countries through many centuries.

In the latter part of 1877 a number of Turkish prisoners of war were located in an abandoned sugar-factory between Túla and Yásnaya. Tolstóy visited them, and found that they were fairly well treated. Being himself much concerned about religion, he naturally talked to them on that subject, and was much impressed to find that each of them had a copy of the Koran in his kit.

On 6th December another son, Andréy, was born.

All through this year, amid bustle and activity of various kinds, spiritual problems continued to torment Tolstóy and his health began to show signs of the strain. Here is a note to Fet, dated 2nd September:

Just now I am constantly out hunting and am busy arranging how to place our educational staff for the winter. I have been to Moscow looking for a teacher and a tutor. To-day I feel quite ill.

1878 Matters did not improve as the months went on, for on 27th January he writes again:

Most unfortunately your suppositions, dear Afanásy Afanásevich, are wrong. Not only am I not at work, but the reason I failed to answer you was because I have been ill at this time. Lately I have even been in bed for some days. A chill in various forms, teeth and side, and the result is that time passes—my best time—and I do no work.

Then follows a touch showing how in many matters his wife's mind was still at one with his own, though she did not share his spiritual struggles, and in regard to the education of the children there was already some disagreement between them:

On reading it I said to my wife, 'Fet's poem is charming but there is one word that is wrong'. She was nursing and bustling about at the time; but at tea, having quieted down she took up the poem to read and at once pointed out the words 'as the Gods'—which I considered bad.

On 25th March 1878 he writes:

Last week, after seventeen years' absence, I went to Petersburg to buy some land in Samára from General B. . . .

There I met a pair of Orlóv Generals who made me shudder. It was just as though one were standing between two sets of rails with goods trains passing. To enter into the minds of these Generals I had to recall the rare days of drunkenness I have experienced, or the days of my very earliest childhood.

After completing *Anna Karénina* Tolstóy again took up *The Decembrists*, which he had laid aside in favour of *War and Peace* fourteen years before. A second cousin of Tolstóy's mother, Prince S. G. Volkónski, had been a prominent Decembrist; and Tolstóy had at his disposal family diaries and journals throwing much light on the conspiracy. While in Petersburg he made personal acquaintance with some survivors of the movement, and also applied to the Commandant of the Petropávlovsk Fortress—who happened to be an officer under whom he had served in the Crimea—for permission to see the Alexis dungeons in which the Decembrists had been

confined. The Commandant received him very politely, allowed him to see over other parts of the fortress, but told him that though any one could enter the dungeons, only three persons in the whole Empire—the Emperor, the Commandant, and the Chief of the Gendarmes—could leave them after having once entered.

Finally, after writing three fragments of it, Tolstóy abandoned this novel to which he had devoted much time. The subject was one he could not have dealt with frankly without getting into trouble with the Censor, and he had been refused permission to study the State Archives, but in the following passage Behrs gives another, and a curiously characteristic, reason for Tolstóy's decision:

He affirmed that the Decembrist insurrection was a result of the influence of French nobles, a large number of whom had emigrated to Russia after the French Revolution. As tutors in aristocratic families they educated the whole Russian nobility, which explains the fact that many of the Decembrists were Catholics. The belief that the movement was due to foreign influence and was not a purely national one, sufficed to prevent Tolstóy from sympathizing with it.

Another letter to Fet again shows the direction in which his mind was working:

6 April 1878.

I have received your delightful and long letter, dear Afanásy Afanásevich. Do not praise me. Really you see in me too much good and in others too much bad. One thing in me is good—that I understand you and therefore love you. But though I love you as you are, I am always angry with you for this, that 'Martha is anxious about many things; but one thing is needful'. And in you that one thing is very strong, but somehow you disdain it and are more concerned about arranging a billiard room. Don't suppose that I refer to poems, though I expect them to come too! But it is not of them I speak, they will come in spite of the billiards; I am speaking of a conception of the world which would make it unnecessary to be angry at the stupidity of mortals. Were you and I pounded together in a mortar and moulded into two people we should make a capital pair. But at present you are so attached to the things of this life that should they

some day fail you it will go hard with you, while I am so indifferent to them that life becomes uninteresting and depress others by an eternal pouring 'from the void into vacuum'! Do not suppose that I have gone mad; I am merely out of sorts, but hope you will love me though I be black.

The prolonged mental struggle through which Tolstóy passed with much suffering during the years 1874-1875 was evident to those about him at least from 1876 onward. Not merely did he go regularly to church, and shut himself up in his study morning and evening to pray, but his former high spirits subsided and his desire to become meek and humble was plainly noticeable. One result of his altered attitude was that he felt keenly that it was wrong to have any enemy. Accordingly he wrote to Turgénev to that effect, and held out to him the hand of friendship.

To this Turgénev replied:

Paris, 8 May 1878.

Dear Leo Nikoláevich,—I only to-day received your letter, addressed *poste-restante*. It gladdened and touched me very much. With the greatest readiness will I renew our former friendship, and I warmly press the hand you hold out to me. You are quite right in supposing me to have no hostile feelings towards you. If such ever existed they have long since disappeared, and the recollection of you remains on me as of a man to whom I am sincerely attached, and of a writer whose earliest steps it was my good fortune to be the first to hail and each new work from whom has aroused in me the liveliest interest. I am heartily glad of the cessation of the misunderstandings that arose between us.

I hope to be in the Government of Orël this summer, and in that case we shall of course see one another. Till then I wish you all that is good, and once more press your hand in friendship.

On 13th June, on the point of starting for Samará with his elder sons and their tutor, Tolstóy writes to Feodor:

I have seldom enjoyed a summer as much as this year, but

¹ Alluding to a proverbial Russian saying; 'Love me when I am black, any one can love me when I'm white.'

a week ago I caught cold and fell ill, and only to-day have I come to life again.

Rather later in the summer the Countess, with the daughters and the younger children, joined her husband in Samára.

Hardly were the Tolstóys back from Samára before Turgénev wrote from Moscow that he would be in Túla the following Monday, 7th August. Tolstóy, accompanied by his brother-in-law, drove thither to meet him and brought him to Yásnaya, where he passed a couple of days. Both writers were delighted to feel that their seventeen-year disagreement was ended, and the Countess, who when a girl had known Turgénev well, was equally pleased to welcome him to the house.

A lady who was staying with them at the time tells us that the two writers spent much of their time in philosophic and religious conversation in Tolstóy's study, but

When they came out into the sitting-room their conversation became general and took a different turn.

'Of an evening we often play *vint* [a game similar to bridge]—do you?' Turgénev inquired of Tolstóy.

'No, we never play cards,' replied the Count, and turned the conversation to another topic.

Knowing him to be fond of chess the Countess Tolstóy asked Turgénev to play a game with her eldest son, a lad of fifteen, saying, 'He will always remember having played with Turgénev.'

Turgénev condescendingly agreed and began a game while continuing to talk to us.

'In Paris I often used to play chess and was considered a good player. They called me *le chevalier du pion*. I am fond of pawns. . . . Do you know the new phrase, now in fashion among the French—*vieux jeu*? Whatever you say, a Frenchman replies, "*Vieux jeu!*"'

'Eh! but one must not joke with you,' he exclaimed suddenly, turning to his youthful opponent. 'You have all but done for me.'

And he began to play carefully, and only won the game with difficulty, for young Tolstóy really played chess excellently.

Turgénev had the gift of words, and spoke readily and

smoothly, but seemed to prefer narrating to conversing. He told us of his confinement in the Hauptwerk of the Spásski police station in Petersburg for his article on the death of Gógol, and described how dull it was. . . .

Tolstóy also narrated, and I liked his stories better. They were more strongly sketched, often humorous, and always original. In them there was much that was simple, unexpected, and touching.

. . . I. S. Aksákov used to say with reference to Tolstóy's gigantic power, that he had 'a bear-like talent', but I will add that his soul is as meek 'as a dove' and enthusiastic as a youth; and that the union of those two qualities explains the new direction he has since taken—a direction which so distressed Turgénev.

This was the last summer Behrs, now a young man of twenty-three, passed with Tolstóy before taking up official work in the Caucasus. His evidence fully supports that of others who had seen Tolstóy in contact with children, peasants, or native races: to all of these Tolstóy extended his charm of comprehension, consideration, and sympathy.

Whenever Tolstóy went out with his gun and his dogs Behrs used to accompany him; and together they would ride twenty-four miles from Yásnaya to visit Count Sergéy Tolstóy at Pirogóvo. Leo Tolstóy took his brother-in-law on these visits, Behrs says, 'for my sake if not for his own, since he knew what pleasure it gave me to be with him'. The remark he made when he heard that Behrs had obtained an official appointment in the Caucasus is characteristic: 'You are too late for the Caucasus. The whole country already stinks of officials.' Characteristic too of the feeling Tolstóy inspired among those who knew him most intimately is Behrs' concluding remark: 'I at least am aware of nothing in his life that needs concealment.'

At the beginning of September Turgénev, on his return from his estate again visited Yásnaya, but he arrived at an unfortunate time when there was illness in the house and paid but a short visit.

A letter to Fet on 5th September shows that Tolstóy

still found himself unable to be quite intimate with his fellow novelist:

Turgénev on his return journey came to see us and was glad to receive your letter. He is still the same, and we know the degree of nearness possible between us.

I have a terrible desire to write something, but feel a depressing doubt whether this is a false or a true appetite.

The last sentence must refer to the *Confession*, most of which was not written till the following year.

In October he again wrote to Fet:

I do not know how, or in what spirit, to begin to write to you, dear Afanásy Afanásevich; any way there are no words for it but, 'I am to blame, I am to blame, and I am altogether to blame!' Though it is always superfluous for apologizers to explain their reasons, I yet will write mine because they are true and explain my condition. For a month past, if not longer, I have been living amid the fumes not of external occurrences (on the contrary we are living quietly by ourselves), but of what goes on inside—something I know not how to name. I go out shooting, read, reply to questions put to me, eat and sleep, but can do nothing, not even write a letter, a score of which have accumulated.

Apparently while in low spirits he wrote to Turgénev asking him not to refer to his (Tolstóy's) writings—for the latter replied on 15th October, saying: 'I am glad you are all physically well, and hope the "mental sickness" of which you write has now passed.' He then continues:

Although you ask me not to speak of your writings, I must still remark that it has never happened to me to laugh at you 'even a little'. Some of your things pleased me very much; others did not please me at all, while others again, such as *The Cossacks* for instance, afforded me great pleasure and excited my wonder. But what ground was there for laughter? I thought you had long since got rid of such 'reflexive' feelings. Why are they current only among authors, and not among musicians, painters, and other artists? Probably because in literary work more of that part of the soul is exposed which it is not quite convenient to show. But at our (already mature) age as authors, it is time we had grown accustomed to it.

This displeased Tolstóy, who in his next letter to Fet expressed his vexation with Turgénev, though the latter apparently had not intended to give offence:

22 November 1878.

Dear Afanásy Afanásevich,—I will go to Moscow and have 'I am to blame' printed on my notepaper. But I don't think I am to blame for not replying to the letter in which you promised to come and see us. I remember my joy at that news and that I replied immediately. If not, still please don't punish me, but come. . . .

Yesterday I received a letter from Turgénev; and do you know, I have decided that it will be better to 'keep farther away from him and from sin' [a common Russian saying]. He is an unpleasant sort of quarrel-maker.

My congratulations to you on your birthday. I will not in future omit to congratulate you on the 23rd, and hope not to forget it for the next dozen times. That will be enough for either of us. *Au revoir*.

Fet was destined to live four years beyond the span Tolstóy allotted him, and Tolstóy himself for another thirty-two years—and what strenuous years they were—in which he wrestled with life's great problems one after another, and flung down before the world his opinions (right, wrong, or motley) on dogmatic theology, Christ's Christianity, religion in general, economic and social problems, the famine, the employment of violence, war, conscription, Government, patriotism, the sex-problem, art, science, food-reform, and the use of stimulants and narcotics, besides producing a series of simple stories for the people, as well as more complex ones for the rest of society, six plays, a great novel, and that stream of weighty and interesting essays and letters which he poured forth from Yásnaya decade after decade.

On 1st October 1878 Turgénev wrote to Fet from Bougival, again saying that he intended to translate *The Cossacks* into French and adding, 'It will give me great pleasure to assist in acquainting the French public with the best story that has been written in our language'.

In another letter from Bougival in December he remarked:

I was very glad to come together again with Tolstóy and I spent three pleasant days with him; his whole family are very sympathetic and his wife is charming. He has grown very quiet, and has matured. His name begins to gain European celebrity—we Russians have long known that he has no rivals.

The course of the story has swept us a little past Tolstoy's fiftieth birthday—the point at which I intended to close this first volume of his *Life*. Besides some brief survey of his writings during his first twenty-five years of authorship, all that now remains is to give a summary of that remarkable work, his *Confession*, which shows us vividly, though with some amount of involuntary artistic heightening, what had been going on in his mind and soul from 1874 to 1879, the year in which it was written.

By way of brief preface to his *Confession* it will be in place to say a few words about two tendencies which, each in its own way, influenced Tolstóy. On the one hand was the religious life of the people with all its medieval traditions. Tolstóy had only to go a short walk from his house to reach the highroad on which pilgrims going afoot to the shrines of the Saints could always be met, and he had many a conversation with these pilgrims at the rest-house they frequented. Among them were some to whom the things of this world were certainly less precious than obedience to the will of God as they understood it; and Tolstóy's stories show us how closely he observed them and how near some of them were to his heart. On the other hand he was influenced by the quite modern and very remarkable movement that was at this time beginning to make itself felt in Russia; a movement having its roots in conditions of life which greatly disturbed him, and which took as one of its watchwords the motto 'Towards the People'—a sentiment that harmonized with his own attitude.

In 1875 public attention was aroused by the trial of the Dolgúshin group of propagandists, and the trial of

'The Moscow 50', in March 1877, revealed the fact that a number of girls of wealthy families were voluntarily living as factory hands, working fourteen hours a day in overcrowded factories, that they might come into touch with working people, teach them, and carry on a social and political propaganda among them. There followed the historic trial of 'The 193' in 1878.

These and many other indications showed that in spite of the repressive measures of the Government a steadily increasing number of Russians felt—what Tolstóy felt strongly—that the existing order of society resulted in the mass of the people having to live in conditions of blighting ignorance and grinding poverty, while a parasitic minority who lived in plenty, and sometimes in extravagant superfluity, rendered no service at all equivalent to the cost of their maintenance. The mere statement that those who had received an education, thanks to the work of the masses, owe service to the masses in return, sufficed to rouse to action some of the young men and women of that day. They left their wealthy homes, lived the simplest lives, ran fearful risks, and according to their lights—not always very clear ones—devoted themselves to the service of the people.

While this was going on around him a man of Tolstóy's temperament could not be at rest.

Already in 1875 Mihaylóvski had published a remarkable series of articles on *The Right and Left Hand of Count Tolstóy*, in which he pointed out that his works revealed the clash of contrary ideals and tendencies in the writer's soul, and that especially his educational articles contained ideas quite in conflict with certain tendencies noticeable in his novels. With remarkable prevision Mihaylóvski predicted an inevitable crisis in Tolstóy's life, and added:

One asks oneself what such a man is to do, and how he is to live? . . . I think an ordinary man in such a position would end by suicide or drunkenness, but a man of worth will seek for other issues—and of these there are several.

One of these he suggested would be to write for the

people (Tolstóy's *Readers* had already been published), or to write so as to remind 'Society' that its pleasures and amusements are not those of the mass of mankind, and thus to arouse the latent feelings of justice in some who forgot the debt they owed to their fellows.

In fact the trial of 'The 193', or the movement from which it arose, had a vital though indirect influence on Tolstóy, who had engaged V. I. Alexéev, a graduate of Petersburg University, as mathematical master for his son. Alexéev had been a member of the Chaykóvski group which carried on an educational propaganda in elementary Socialism in the early '70's. (He must not be confused with P. I. Chaykóvski, the great composer, previously mentioned.) The activities of this group were so restricted and they were so hampered by the police, that some of its members, feeling a need of freer activity, migrated to Kansas, U.S.A., where for two years they carried on an agricultural colony. Dissensions arose among them and their experiment failed. Alexéev returned to Russia. Chaykóvski settled in England, where he spent many years, and only returned to Russia after the amnesty of 1905, to be again arrested and to spend more than a year in prison awaiting a trial which ended in his acquittal. In 1918, when I was in North Russia, he was head of the Provisional Socialist Government of that region, at whose invitation the Allied troops entered Archangel.

Tolstóy noticed that Alexéev was a man who shaped his life in accord with his beliefs, and he respected him accordingly, and through him made acquaintance with some of the best representatives of the immature Socialist movement then brewing in Russia. We have here a remarkable example of the indirect way in which thoughts influence the world. Auguste Comte wrote a philosophy. Filtering through the minds of G. H. Lewes and J. S. Mill it reached Nicholas Chaykóvski when he was a schoolboy of fourteen in a Gymnasium in Petersburg. 'It fascinated me to such an extent', says he in his reminiscences, 'that, while sitting in school, I longed to get back to our lodgings and to my chosen reading. The

more I progressed the more was I absorbed. This study powerfully affected my mind and systematized my ideas.' A few years later Chaykóvski, having read much in the meantime, formed his group, which sowed the seeds of changes that were yet to come. Progress however was slow and he felt 'the ineffectiveness of ordinary political and socialistic propaganda among a deeply religious peasantry still hopeful of benefits from above'. This forced him to reconsider the whole situation. 'I met', adds he, 'some friends with whom I began to work upon the rather Utopian idea of formulating a new religion, and for the sake of more effective experiment we were soon compelled to transfer ourselves with this stupendous mission to the plains of Kansas.'

Wishing to transform society Chaykóvski had seen the need of some systematic outlook on life—'a new religion' in fact. Dissatisfied with his own outlook on life, Tolstóy was seeking a new religion, which when he found it led him to demand great changes in society. The novelist and the propagandist, who never met in the flesh, had therefore much in common, though Tolstóy disliked the works of Comte and Mill which had influenced Chaykóvski, and (except Mill's *Autobiography*, which interested him) could hardly speak of them with tolerance. Detesting the methods of violence to which those who followed Chaykóvski felt themselves driven, Tolstóy was still unable to doubt the sincerity of the faith that actuated many of them, for they had all to lose and nothing to gain by joining the revolutionary movement. Sophie Peróvski, one of 'The 193' (subsequently hanged in Petersburg for her part in the assassination of Alexander II), was the daughter of the Governor-General of that city and a niece of the Minister of Education. Dmítri Lisogúb, a landowner, devoted his whole fortune of some £40,000 to the movement, and was hanged in Odessa. Prince Peter Kropótkin risked his all to give lessons to workmen, and escaped abroad having lost position, fortune, and the right to live in his native land. Tolstóy, an older man with a strong character and

definite views of his own, could not join the Socialist movement, but that he was indirectly influenced by it is beyond doubt.

The state of Russian life was such that men of sensitive consciences could not be at rest (as indeed when and where in the wide world can they?), and the work Tolstóy had already done marked him out as one in whose soul the struggle that was moving others would assuredly be fought out strenuously. No one however, and certainly not he himself, as yet knew what effect that crisis would have upon him, or what his course of life would be in the years to come.

CHAPTER XI

CONFESSION

WE have now come to Tolstóy's *Confession*, or 'An Introduction to a criticism of Dogmatic Theology and an Investigation of the Christian Teachings' as the Russian title runs. In the preceding chapters passages from the first pages of it have already been quoted. I will keep as close to Tolstóy's words as possible but, having to condense, must omit much and must paraphrase some passages to avoid repetition. As the *Confession* can, and should, itself be read in this edition, I will here give only a skeleton of the argument, treating what Tolstóy tells of his own experience rather more fully.

Many men at the age of adolescence, or at any rate while their minds were still maturing, have experienced the change known as 'Conversion'. That is to say they have more or less suddenly turned round and looked at life from a fresh point of view: what had been latent in them has become dominant and worldly things have become subordinate to spiritual.

What is unusual about Tolstóy's conversion is that it came so late in life and so gradually, and that the intellect played so great a part in it.

Some men take to religion at the prompting of the heart, others at the prompting of the brain. Tolstóy belonged chiefly to the latter category, not from lack of heart but because, strong as were his emotions his intellectual power was stronger still.

His *Confession* was written in 1879, and in it he says:

'Five years ago something very strange began to happen to me: At first I experienced moments of perplexity and arrest of life, as though I did not know how to live or what to do; and I felt lost and became dejected. But

this passed and I went on living as before. Then these moments of perplexity recurred oftener and oftener and always in the same form. They were always expressed by the questions: What is it for? What does it lead to?

'At first it seemed to me that these were aimless and irrelevant questions. I thought it was all well known and that should I ever wish to deal with the solution, it would not cost me much effort; just at present I had no time for it, but when I wanted to I could find the answer. The questions however began to repeat themselves frequently, and more and more insistently demanded replies; and like drops of ink always falling on one place, they ran together into one black blot.

'That occurred which happens to every one sickening with a mortal, internal disease. At first trivial signs of indisposition appear to which the sick man pays no attention, then these signs reappear more and more often and merge into one uninterrupted period of suffering. The suffering increases and, before the sick man can look round, what he took for a mere indisposition has already become more important to him than anything else in the world—it is death!

'That was what happened to me. I understood that it was no casual indisposition but something very important, and that if these questions constantly recurred it would be necessary to answer them. And I tried to do so. The questions seemed such stupid simple childish questions, but as soon as I touched them and tried to solve them, I at once became convinced (1) that they are not childish and stupid but the most important and deepest of life's questions; and (2) that try as I would I could not solve them. Before occupying myself with my Samára estate, the education of my son, or the writing of a book, I had to know *why* I was doing it. As long as I did not know why, I could do nothing, and could not live. Amid the thoughts of estate management, which greatly occupied me at that time, the question would suddenly occur to me: "Well, you will have 16,000 acres of land in Samára Government and 300 horses, and what next?"

. . . And I was quite disconcerted and did not know what to think. Or when considering plans for the education of my children, I would say to myself: "What for?" Or when considering how the peasants might be made prosperous, I suddenly said to myself, "But what business is it of mine?" Or when thinking of the fame my works would bring me, I said to myself, "Very well: you will be more famous than Gógol, or Púshkin, or Shakespeare, or Molière, or than all the writers in the world—and what will it lead to?" And I could find no reply at all. The questions would not wait, they had to be answered at once, and if I did not answer them it was impossible to live. But there was no answer.

'I felt that what I had been standing on had broken down, and that I had nothing left under my feet. What I had lived on no longer existed, and I had nothing left to live on.

'My life came to a standstill. I could breathe, eat, drink, and sleep, and I could not help doing these things; but there was no life, for there were no wishes, the fulfilment of which I could consider reasonable. . . . Had a fairy come and offered to fulfil my desires, I should not have known what to ask. . . . If in moments of intoxication I felt something which I cannot call a wish but a habit left by former wishes, in sober moments I knew this to be a delusion, and that there is really nothing to wish for. I could not even wish to know the truth, for I guessed in what it consisted. The truth was that life is meaningless. I had, as it were, lived, lived, and walked, walked, till I had come to a precipice and saw clearly that there was nothing ahead of me but destruction. It was impossible to stop, impossible to go back, and impossible to close my eyes or avoid seeing that there was nothing ahead but suffering and real death—complete annihilation.

'It had come to this, that I, a healthy, fortunate man, felt I could no longer live: some irresistible power impelled me to rid myself, one way or other, of life. I cannot say I *wished* to kill myself. The power which drew

me away from life was stronger, fuller, and more widespread, than any mere wish.

'The thought of self-destruction came to me now as naturally as thoughts of how to improve my life had come formerly. And it was so seductive that I had to be wily with myself lest I should carry it out too hastily: "If I cannot unravel matters, there will always be time." And it was then that I, a man favoured by fortune, hid a cord from myself lest I should hang myself from the crosspiece of the partition in my room where I undressed alone every evening; and I ceased to go out shooting with a gun lest I should be tempted by so easy a way of ending my life. I did not myself know what I wanted: I feared life, desired to escape from it, yet still hoped something of it.

'And all this befell me at a time when all around me I had what is considered complete good fortune. I was not yet fifty; I had a good wife who loved me and whom I loved; good children, and a large estate which without much effort on my part improved and increased. I was more respected by my relations and acquaintances than at any previous time. I was praised by people, and without much self-deception could consider that my name was famous. And far from being insane or mentally unwell, on the contrary I enjoyed a strength of mind and body such as I have seldom met with among men of my kind: physically I could keep pace with the peasants at mowing, and mentally I could work for eight to ten hours at a stretch without experiencing any ill results from such exertion. . . .

'My mental condition presented itself to me in this way: my life is a stupid and spiteful joke some one has played on me. Though I did not acknowledge a "some one" who created me, yet that form of representation—that some one had played an evil and stupid joke on me by placing me in the world—was the form of expression that suggested itself to me most naturally.

'Involuntarily it appeared to me that there, somewhere, is some one who amuses himself by watching how I live

for thirty or forty years, learning, developing, maturing in body and mind, and how—having now with matured mental powers reached the summit of life from which it all lies before me, I stand on that summit—like an arch-fool—seeing plainly that there is nothing in life, and that there has been and will be nothing. And he is amused. . . .

‘But whether that “some one” laughing at me existed or not, I was none the better off. I could give no reasonable meaning to any single action, or to my whole life. I was only surprised that I could have avoided understanding this from the very beginning—it has been so long known to all. To-day or to-morrow sickness and death will come (they have come already) to those I love or to me; nothing will remain but stench and worms. Sooner or later my deeds, whatever they may have been, will be forgotten, and I shall not exist. Then why go on making any effort? . . . How can man fail to see this? And how go on living? That is what is surprising! One can only live when one is intoxicated with life; as soon as one is sober it is impossible not to see that it is all a mere fraud and a stupid fraud! That is precisely what it is: there is nothing either amusing or witty about it, it is simply cruel and stupid.

‘There is an Eastern fable told long ago, of a traveller overtaken on a plain by an enraged beast. Escaping from the beast he leaps into a dry well, but sees at the bottom of the well a dragon that has opened its jaws to swallow him. And the unfortunate man, not daring to climb out lest he should be destroyed by the enraged beast, and not daring to drop to the bottom of the well lest he should be eaten by the dragon, seizes a twig growing in a crack in the well and clings to it. His hands grow weaker, and he feels he will soon have to resign himself to the destruction that awaits him above or below; but he still clings on, and sees that two mice, a black and a white one, go regularly round and round the stem of the twig to which he is clinging, and gnaw at it. And soon the twig will snap and he will fall into the dragon’s jaws.

The traveller sees this and knows that he will inevitably perish; but while still hanging he looks around and finds some drops of honey on the leaves of the twig and reaches them with his tongue and licks them. So I too clung to the twig of life, knowing that the dragon of death was inevitably awaiting me, ready to tear me to pieces; and I could not understand why I had fallen into such torment. I tried to lick the honey which formerly consoled me, but the honey no longer gave me pleasure, and the white and black mice of day and night gnawed at the branch by which I hung. I saw the dragon clearly and the honey no longer tasted sweet. And this is not a fable, but the real unanswerable truth intelligible to all.

"The deception of the joys of life which formerly allayed my terror of the dragon, now no longer deceives me. No matter how much I may be told: "You cannot understand the meaning of life so do not think about it, but live," I can no longer do it: I have already done it too long. I cannot now help seeing day and night going round and bringing me to death. That is all I see, for that alone is true. All else is false.

"The two drops of honey which diverted my eyes from the cruel truth longer than the rest: my love of family and of writing—art as I called it—were no longer sweet to me.

"Family . . . said I to myself. But my family—wife and children—are also human. They too are placed as I am: they must either live in a lie, or see the terrible truth. Why should they live? Why should I love them, guard them, bring them up, or watch them? That they may come to the despair I feel, or else be stupid? Loving them, I cannot hide the truth from them: each step in knowledge leads them to that truth. And the truth is death.

"*"Art, poetry?"* . . . Under the influence of success and praise, I had long assured myself that this was a thing one could do though death was drawing near—death which destroys all things, including my work and its remembrance; but I soon saw that that too was a fraud.

It was plain to me that art is an adornment to life, an allurements to life. But life had lost its attraction for me—so how could I attract others? As long as I was not living my own life but was borne on the waves of some other life—as long as I believed that life had a meaning—though one I could not express—the reflection of life in poetry and art of all kinds afforded me pleasure; it was pleasant to look at life in the mirror of art. But when I began to seek the meaning of life and felt the necessity of living on my own account, that mirror became for me unnecessary, superfluous, ridiculous, or painful. I could no longer soothe myself with what I saw in the mirror, for what I saw was that my position was stupid and desperate. It was all very well to enjoy the sight when in the depth of my soul I believed that my life had a meaning. Then the play of lights in life—comic, tragic, touching, beautiful, and terrible—amused me. But when I knew life to be meaningless and terrible, the play in the mirror could no longer amuse me. No sweetness of honey could be sweet to me when I saw the dragon, and saw the mice gnawing away my support.

‘Nor was that all. Had I simply understood that life has no meaning I could have borne it quietly knowing that that was my lot. But I could not satisfy myself with that. Had I been like a man living in a wood from which he knows there is no exit I could have lived, but I was like one lost in a wood who horrified at having lost his way rushes about wishing to find the road, yet knows that each step he takes confuses him more and more, and still cannot help rushing about.

‘It was indeed terrible. And to rid myself of the terror, I wished to kill myself. I experienced terror at what awaited me—knew that that terror was even worse than the position I was in, but still I could not patiently await the end. However convincing the argument might be that in any case some vessel in my heart would give way, or something would burst, and all would be over, I could not patiently await that end. The horror of darkness was too great and I wished to free myself

from it as quickly as possible by noose or bullet. That was the feeling which drew me most strongly towards suicide.

“But perhaps I have overlooked something or misunderstood something? It cannot be that this condition of despair is natural to man!” thought I, and as a perishing man seeks safety I sought some way of escape.

‘I sought everywhere; and thanks to a life spent in learning, and thanks also to the connexions I had with the scholarly world, I had access to scientists and scholars in all branches of knowledge, and they readily showed me all their knowledge not only in books but also in conversation, so that I had at my disposal all that knowledge had to say on this problem of life. . . .

‘The question which at the age of fifty brought me to the verge of suicide, was the simplest of questions lying in the soul of every man, from a foolish child to the wisest elder: it was a question without answering which one cannot live, as I had found by experience. It was, What will come of what I am doing to-day or shall do to-morrow? What will come of my whole life?

‘Differently expressed the question is: Why should I live, why wish for anything, or do anything? It can also be expressed thus: Has life any meaning that the inevitable death awaiting one does not destroy? All human knowledge I found divided into two kinds. One kind, such as chemistry, mathematics, and the exact sciences, did not deal with my question. They were interesting, attractive, and wonderfully definite, but made no attempt to solve the question; while on the other hand the speculative sciences, culminating in metaphysics, dealt with the question, but supplied no satisfactory answer.

‘Where philosophy does not lose sight of the essential question its answer is always one and the same: an answer given by Socrates, Schopenhauer, Solomon, and Buddha.

“We approach truth only in so far as we depart from life,” said Socrates when preparing for death. “For what

do we, who love truth, strive after in life? To free ourselves from the body and from all the evil that is caused by the body! If so, then how can we fail to be glad when death comes to us?"

"The wise man seeks death all his life and therefore does not fear death."

'And Schopenhauer also says that life is an evil; and Solomon (or whoever wrote the books attributed to him) says:

"Vanity of vanities, all is vanity. What profit hath man of all his labour under the sun? . . . There is no remembrance of former things, neither shall there be any remembrance of things that are to come, with those that shall come after. . . .

"Therefore I hated life, because the work that is wrought under the sun is grievous to me; for all is vanity and vexation of spirit."

'And Sakya Muni, when he learnt what age and sickness and death are, could find no consolation in life and decided that life is the greatest of evils; and he devoted all the strength of his soul to free himself from it and to free others, and to do this so that even after death life shall not be renewed any more but be completely destroyed at its very roots. So speaks all the wisdom of India.

'These then are the direct replies that human wisdom gives when it replies to the question of life:

"The life of the body is an evil and a lie. Therefore the destruction of the life of the body is a blessing and we should desire it," says Socrates.

"Life is that which should not be—an evil; and the passage into Nothingness is the only good in life," says Schopenhauer.

"All that is in the world: folly and wisdom, and riches and poverty, and mirth and grief—are vanity and emptiness. Man dies and nothing is left of him. And that is stupid," says Solomon.

"To live in the consciousness of the inevitability of suffering, of becoming enfeebled, of old age, and of death,

is impossible—we must free ourselves from life, from all possible life,” says Buddha.

‘And what these strong minds said, has been said and thought and felt by millions upon millions of people like them. And I have thought it and felt it.

‘One cannot deceive oneself. It is all—vanity! Happy is he who has not been born: death is better than life, and one must free oneself from life.

‘Then I began to consider the lives of the men of my own kind, and I found that they met the problem in one or other of four ways.

‘The first way was that of ignorance. Some people—mostly women, or very young or very dull people—have not yet understood the question of life; but I having understood it could not again shut my eyes.

‘The second way was that of the Epicureans, expressed by Solomon when he said: “Then I commended mirth, because a man hath no better thing under the sun, than to eat, and to drink, and to be merry.”

‘That is the way in which the majority of people of our circle make life possible for themselves. Their circumstances furnish them with more of comfort than of hardship, and their moral obtuseness makes it possible for them to forget that the advantage of their position is an accidental advantage, and that not every one can have a thousand wives and a thousand palaces like Solomon, and that for every man with a thousand wives there are a thousand without wives, and that for each palace there are a thousand people who have to build it in the sweat of their brows, and that the accident that has to-day made me a Solomon may to-morrow make me Solomon’s slave. The dullness of these people’s imagination enables them to forget what gave Buddha no peace—the inevitability of sickness, age, and death, which to-day or to-morrow will destroy all these pleasures. I could not imitate these people, I had not their dullness of imagination and could not artificially produce it in myself.

‘The third escape is that of strength and energy. It

consists in understanding that life is an evil and an absurdity, and in destroying it. It is a way adopted by a few exceptionally strong and consistent people. I saw that it was the worthiest way of escape and I wished to adopt it.

‘The fourth escape is that of weakness. It consists in seeing the truth of the situation and yet clinging to life as though one still hoped something from it; and I found myself in that category.

‘To live like Solomon and Schopenhauer, knowing that life is a stupid joke played upon us, and still to go on living: washing oneself, dressing, dining, talking, and even writing books, was to me repulsive and tormenting, but I remained in that position.

‘I now see that if I did not kill myself it was due to some dim consciousness of the invalidity of my thoughts. And I began to feel, rather than argue, in this way: “I, my reason, has acknowledged life to be unreasonable. If there be no higher reason (and there is not: nothing can prove that there is) then for me reason is the creator of life. If reason did not exist there would be for me no life. How can reason deny life when it is the creator of life? Or to put it the other way: were there no life my reason would not exist; therefore reason is life’s son. Life is all. Reason is its fruit, yet reason denies life itself!” I felt that there was something wrong here.

‘Nothing prevents our denying life by suicide. Well then, kill yourself and cease discussing. If life displeases you, kill yourself! You live and cannot understand the meaning of life—then finish it; and do not fool about in life, saying and writing that you do not understand it. You have come into good company where people are contented and like what they are doing; if you find it dull and repulsive—go away!

‘Indeed what are we who are convinced of the necessity of suicide yet do not decide to commit it, but the weakest, most inconsistent, and to put it plainly, the stupidest of men, fussing about with our own stupidity as a fool fusses about with a painted doll?

““There is something wrong,” said I to myself; but what was wrong I could in no way make out. It was long before the fog began to clear and I began to be able to restate my position.

‘It had seemed to me that the narrow circle of rich, learned, and leisured people to which I belonged formed the whole of humanity, and that the millions of others who have lived and are living were cattle of some sort—not real people. . . . And it was long before it dawned upon me to ask: “But what meaning is, and has been, given to their lives by all the millions of common folk who live and have lived in the world?”’

‘I long lived in this state of lunacy, which in fact, if not in words, is particularly characteristic of us liberal and learned people. But whether the strange physical affection I have for the real labouring people compelled me to understand them and to see that they are not so stupid as we suppose, or whether it was due to the sincerity of my conviction that I could know nothing beyond the fact that the best I could do was to hang myself, at any rate I instinctively felt that if I wished to live and understand the meaning of life I must seek this meaning not among those who have lost it and wish to kill themselves, but among those millions of the past and the present who knew it and who support the burden of their own lives and of ours also.

‘And on examining the matter I saw that the millions of mankind always have had, and still have, a knowledge of the meaning of life; but *that* knowledge is their faith, which I could not but reject. “It is God, one and three, the creation in six days, the devils and angels, and all the rest, that I cannot accept as long as I retain my reason,” said I to myself.

‘My position was terrible. I knew I could find nothing along the path of reasonable knowledge except a denial of life; and in faith I could find nothing but a denial of reason, still more impossible to me than a denial of life.

‘Finally I saw that my mistake lay in ever expecting an examination of finite things to supply a meaning to

life. The finite has no ultimate meaning apart from the infinite. The two must be linked together before an answer to life's problems can be reached.

'It had only appeared to me that knowledge gave a definite answer—Schopenhauer's answer: that life has no meaning and is an evil. On examining the matter further I understood that the reply is not positive, it was only my feeling that made it seem so. The reply, strictly expressed as the Brahmins and Solomon and Schopenhauer express it, amounts only to an indefinite answer, like the reply given in mathematics when instead of solving an equation we find we have reached an identity: $X = X$, or $O = O$. The answer is, that life is nothing. So that philosophic knowledge merely asserts that it cannot solve the question, and the solution remains, as far as it is concerned, indefinite. And I understood further that however unreasonable and monstrous might be the replies given by faith, they had this advantage, that they introduce into each reply a relation between the finite and the infinite, without which relation no reply is possible.

'Whichever way I put the question that relation appeared in the answer. How am I to live?—According to the law of God. What real result will come of my life?—Eternal torment or eternal bliss. What meaning has life that death does not destroy?—Union with the eternal God: heaven.

'Faith still remained for me as irrational as it was before, but I could not but admit that it alone gives mankind a reply to the questions of life, and that consequently it makes life possible.

'Where there is life, there since man began faith has made life possible for him; and the chief outline of that faith is everywhere and always one and the same. Faith does not consist, as is usually supposed, in agreeing with what some one has said; faith is a knowledge of the meaning of human life as a result of which man does not destroy himself but lives. Faith is the strength of life. If a man lives, he believes in something. If he does

not see and recognize the visionary nature of the finite, then he believes in the finite; if he understands the visionary nature of the finite, he must believe in the infinite. Without faith he cannot live.

‘What am I?—A part of the infinite. In those few words lies the whole problem.

‘I began dimly to understand that in the replies given by faith the deepest human wisdom is stored up.

‘I understood this, but it made matters no better for me.

‘I was now ready to accept any faith if only it did not demand of me a direct denial of reason—which would be a falsehood. And I studied Buddhism and Moham-medanism from books, and most of all I studied Christianity both from books and from living people.

‘Naturally I turned first of all to the Orthodox of my circle, to learned people, to Church theologians, to monks, to theologians of the newest shade, and even to Evangelicals¹ who profess salvation by faith in the Redemption. And I seized on these believers and questioned them as to their beliefs and their understanding of the meaning of life.

‘But in spite of my readiness to make all possible concessions, I saw that what they gave out as their faith did not explain the meaning of life but obscured it.

‘I remember the painful feeling of fear of being thrown back into my former state of despair, after the hope I often and often experienced in my intercourse with these people.

‘The more fully they explained their doctrines to me the more clearly did I see their error. . . . It was not that in their doctrines they mixed many unnecessary and

¹ Readers of *Resurrection* (Book II, Chap 17) will remember the vivid description of an Evangelical meeting addressed by Kiesewetter, who spoke in English. The original from whom Tolstóy drew Kiesewetter was (as he himself wrote me) Baedeker, a well-known Evangelical preacher who lived in England but visited Russia frequently.

unreasonable things with the Christian truths that had always been near to me, that was not what repelled me. I was repelled by the fact that these people's lives were like my own, with only this difference—that such a life did not correspond to the principles they expounded in their teachings.

'No arguments could convince me of the truth of their faith. Only deeds which showed that they saw a meaning in life which made what was so dreadful to me—poverty, sickness, and death—not dreadful to them, could convince me. And such deeds I did not see among the various bodies of believers in our circle. On the contrary, I saw such deeds done by people of our circle who were the most unbelieving, but never by the so-called believers of our circle.¹

'And I understood that the belief of these people was not the faith I sought, and that their faith is not a real faith but an Epicurean consolation in life.

'And I began to draw near to the believers among the poor, simple, unlettered folk: pilgrims, monks, sectarians, and peasants. Among them too I found a great deal of superstition mixed with the Christian truths, but their superstitions seemed a necessary and natural part of their lives. . . . And I began to look well into the life and faith of these people, and the more I considered it the more I became convinced that they have a real faith which is a necessity to them and alone gives their life a meaning and makes it possible for them to live. . . . In contrast with what I had seen in our circle, where the whole of life is passed in idleness, amusements, and dissatisfaction, I saw that the whole life of these people

¹ This passage is the more noteworthy because it is almost the only reference (and even this is indirect) made by Tolstóy at this period to the revolutionary or 'To-the-People' movement in which many young men and women were risking and sacrificing home, property, freedom, and life itself, from motives that had much in common with his own feeling that the upper layers of 'Society' are parasitic, and prey on the vitals of the people who support them.

was passed in heavy labour, and that they were content with life. . . . While we think it terrible that we have to suffer and die, these folk live, and suffer, and approach death, with tranquillity, and in most cases gladly.

‘And I learnt to love these people. The more I came to know their life the more I loved them and the easier it became for me to live. So I went on for about two years, and a change took place in me which had long been preparing and the promise of which had always been in me. The life of our circle, the rich and learned, not merely became distasteful to me but lost all meaning for me, while the life of the whole labouring people, the whole of mankind who produce life, appeared to me in its true light. I understood that *that* is life itself, and that the meaning given to that life is true, and I accept it.

‘I then understood that my answer to the question, “What is life?” when I said that life is “evil” was quite correct. The only mistake was that that answer referred to *my* life, but not to life in general. My life, a life of indulgence and desires, was meaningless and evil. . . . And I understood the truth which I afterwards found in the Gospels, that men love darkness rather than the light because their deeds are evil; and that to see things as they are one must think and speak of the life of humanity, and not of the life of the minority who are parasites on life.

‘And indeed the bird lives so that it must fly, collect food, and build its nest; and when I see the bird doing that, I joy in its joy. The goat, hare, and wolf, live so that they must feed themselves, and propagate, and feed their families, and when they do so I feel firmly assured that they are happy and that their life is a reasonable one. And what does man do? He should earn a living as the beasts do, but with this difference—that he would perish if he did it alone; he has to procure it not for himself but for all. When he does *that*, I have a firm assurance that he is happy and that his life is reasonable. And what had I done during the whole thirty years of my conscious life? I had not only not been earning

a living for all, I had not even earned my own living. I had lived as a parasite, and when I asked myself what use my life was, I found that my life was useless. If the meaning of human life lies in supporting it, how could I, who for thirty years had occupied myself not with supporting life but with destroying it in myself and in others—how could I obtain any other reply than that my life was senseless and an evil? It was both senseless and evil.

‘The conviction that a knowledge of life can only be found by living, led me to doubt the goodness of my own life. . . . During that whole year while I was asking myself almost every moment whether I should not end matters with a noose or a bullet—all that time, beside the course of thought and observation about which I have spoken, my heart was oppressed with a painful feeling I can only describe as a search for God.

‘I went over in my mind the arguments of Kant and Schopenhauer showing the impossibility of proving the existence of a God and I began to refute them. Cause, said I to myself, is not a category such as are Time and Space. If I exist there must be some cause for it, and a cause of causes. And that first cause of all is what men have called “God”. And as soon as I acknowledged that there is a force in whose power I am, I at once felt that I could live. But I asked myself: What is that cause, that force? How am I to think of it? What are my relations to that which I call “God”? And only the familiar replies occurred to me: “He is the Creator and Preserver.” This reply did not satisfy me, and I felt I was losing within me what I needed for my life. I became terrified and began to pray to him whom I sought, that he should help me. But the more I prayed the more apparent it became to me that he did not hear me and that there was no one to whom to address myself. And with despair in my heart that there is no God at all, I said: “Lord, have mercy, save me! Lord, teach me!” But no one had mercy on me and I felt that my life was coming to a standstill.

'But again and again I returned to the same admission that I could not have come into the world without any cause or reason or meaning, I could not be such a fledgeling fallen from its nest as I felt myself to be. Or granting that I be such, lying on my back in the high grass, even then I cry because I know that a mother has borne me within her, has hatched me, warmed me, fed me, and loved me. Where is she—that mother? If she has deserted me, who is it that has done so? I cannot hide from myself that some one bore me, loving me. Who was that some one? Again "God"?

"He exists," said I to myself. And I had only for an instant to admit that, and at once life rose within me and I felt the possibility and joy of living. But again from the admission of the existence of a God I went on to seek my relations with him; and again I imagined *that* God—our creator in three persons who sent his son, the Saviour—and again *that* God, detached from the world and from me, melts like a block of ice, melts before my eyes and again nothing remains, and again the spring of life dries up within me and I despair and feel that I have nothing to do but to kill myself. And the worst of all is that I feel I cannot do it.

'Not twice or three times, but tens and hundreds of times I reached those conditions first of joy and animation and then of despair and consciousness of the impossibility of living.

'I remember that it was in early spring, I was alone in the wood listening to its sounds. I listened and thought ever of the same thing, as I had constantly done during those last three years. I was again seeking God.

"Very well, there is no God," said I to myself; "there is no one who is not my imagination but a reality like my whole life. He does not exist and no miracles can prove his existence, because the miracles would be my perceptions, besides being irrational."

"But my *perception* of God, of him whom I seek," asked I of myself, "where has that perception come from?" And again at this thought the glad waves of life rose

within me. All that was around me came to life and received a meaning. But my joy did not last long. My mind continued its work.

““The conception of God is not God,” said I to myself. “The conception is what takes place within me. The conception of God is something I can evoke or can refrain from evoking in myself. That is not what I seek. I seek that without which there can be no life.” And again all around me and within me began to die, and again I wished to kill myself.

“But then I turned my gaze upon myself, on what went on within me, and I remembered that I only lived at those times when I believed in God. As it was before, so it was now; I need only be aware of God to live, I need only forget him, or disbelieve in him, and I die. . . . “What more do you seek?” exclaimed a voice within me. “This is he. He is that without which one cannot live. To know God and to live is one and the same thing. God is life. Live seeking God and then you will not live without God.” And more than ever before all within me and around me lit up, and the light did not again abandon me.

“And I was saved from suicide. . . . And strange to say the strength of life which returned to me was not new but quite old—the same that had borne me along in my earliest days.

“I quite returned to what belonged to my earliest childhood and youth. I returned to the belief in that Will which produced me and desires something of me. I returned to the belief that the chief and only aim of my life is to be better, that is, to live in accord with that Will. And I returned to the belief that I can find the expression of that Will in what humanity, in the distant past hidden from me, has produced for its guidance: that is to say, I returned to a belief in God, in moral perfecting, and in a tradition transmitting to us the meaning of life. . . .

“I turned from the life of our circle, acknowledging that theirs is not life but only a simulacrum of life, and that the conditions of superfluity in which we live deprive

us of the possibility of understanding life. . . . The simple labouring people around me were the Russian people, and I turned to them and to the meaning they give to life. That meaning, if one can put it into words, was the following. Every man has come into this world by the will of God. And God has so made man that every man can destroy his soul or save it. The aim of man in life is to save his soul, and to save his soul he must live "godly", and to live "godly" he must renounce all the pleasures of life, must labour, humble himself, suffer, and be merciful. . . . The meaning of this was clear and near to my heart. But together with this meaning of the popular faith of our non-sectarian folk among whom I live, much was inseparably bound up that revolted me and seemed to me inexplicable: sacraments, Church services, fasts, and the adoration of relics and icons. The people cannot separate the one from the other, nor could I. And strange as much of it was to me, I accepted everything, and attended the services, knelt morning and evening in prayer, fasted, and prepared to receive the eucharist, and at first my reason did not resent anything. What had formerly seemed to me impossible did not now evoke in me any resistance. . . .

'I told myself that the essence of every faith consists in its giving life a meaning which death does not destroy. Naturally for a faith to be able to reply to the questions of a king dying in luxury, of an old slave tormented by overwork, and of all sorts of people, young and old, wise and foolish—its answers must be expressed in all sorts of different ways. . . . But this argument, justifying in my eyes the queerness of much on the ritual side of religion, did not suffice to allow me in the one great affair of life—religion—to do things which seemed to me questionable. With all my soul I wished to be in a position to mingle with the people, fulfilling the ritual side of their religion, but I could not do it. I felt that I should be lying to myself and mocking at what was sacred to me were I to do so. At this point however our recent Russian theological writers came to my rescue.

‘According to the explanation these theologians gave, the fundamental dogma of our faith is the infallibility of the Church. From the admission of that dogma follows inevitably the truth of all that is professed by the Church. The Church as an assembly of true believers united by love, and therefore possessed of true knowledge, became the basis of my belief. I told myself that divine truth cannot be accessible to a separate individual, it is revealed only to the whole assembly of people united by love. To attain truth one must not separate, and not to separate one must love and must endure things one may not agree with.

‘Truth reveals itself to love, and if you do not submit to the rites of the Church you transgress against love, and by transgressing against love you deprive yourself of the possibility of recognizing the truth. I did not then see the sophistry contained in this argument. I did not see that union in love may give the greatest love, but certainly cannot give us divine truth expressed in the definite words of the Nicene Creed. I also did not perceive that love cannot make some particular expression of truth an obligatory condition of union. I did not then see these flaws in the argument, and thanks to it I was able to accept and perform all the rites of the Orthodox Church without understanding most of them.

‘When fulfilling the rites of the Church I humbled my reason, submitted to tradition, united myself with my forefathers—the father, mother, and grandparents I loved, and with all those millions of the common people whom I respected. When rising before dawn for the early Church services I knew I was acting well, if only because I was sacrificing my bodily ease to humble my mental pride and for the sake of finding the meaning of life. However insignificant these sacrifices might be I made them for the sake of something good. I fasted, prepared for communion, and observed the fixed hours of prayer at home and in church. During Church service I attended to every word and gave the words a meaning whenever I could.

‘But this reading of meanings into the rites had its limits. . . . If I explained to myself the frequent repetition of prayers for the Tsar and his relatives by the fact that they are more exposed to temptation than other people and therefore more in need of being prayed for, the prayers about subduing enemies and foes under his feet (even though one tried to say that sin was the foe prayed against) and many other unintelligible prayers—nearly two-thirds of the whole service—either remained quite incomprehensible or, when I forced an explanation into them, made me feel that I was lying, and thereby quite destroying my relation to God and losing all possibility of believing. . . .

‘Never shall I forget the painful feeling I experienced the day I received the eucharist for the first time after many years. The service, confession, and prayers were quite intelligible and produced in me a glad consciousness that the meaning of life was being revealed to me. The communion itself I explained as an act performed in remembrance of Christ and indicating a purification from sin and the full acceptance of Christ’s teaching. If that explanation was artificial I did not notice its artificiality, so happy was I at humbling and abasing myself before the priest—a simple, timid country clergyman—and clearing all the dirt out of my soul and confessing my vices, so glad was I to merge in thought with the humility of the Fathers who wrote the prayers of the Office, so glad was I of union with all who have believed and now believe, that I did not notice the artificiality of my explanation. But when I approached the altar gates and the priest made me say that I believed that what I was about to swallow was truly flesh and blood, I felt a pain in my heart: it was not merely a false note, it was a cruel demand made by some one or other who evidently had never known what faith is.

‘I now permit myself to say that it was a cruel demand, but I did not then think so: only it was indescribably painful to me. At the time I found in my soul a feeling which helped me to endure it. This was the feeling of

self-abasement and humility. I humbled myself, swallowed that flesh and blood without any blasphemous feelings, and with a wish to believe. But the blow had been struck, and knowing what awaited me I could not go a second time.

'I continued to fulfil the rites of the Church and still believed that the doctrine I was following contained the truth, when something happened to me which I now understand, but which then seemed strange.

'I was listening to the conversation of an illiterate peasant, a pilgrim, about God, faith, life, and salvation when a knowledge of faith revealed itself to me. I drew near to the people, listening to their opinions on life and faith, and I understood the truth. So also was it when I read the Lives of the Saints which became my favourite books. Putting aside the miracles and regarding them as fables illustrating thoughts, this reading revealed to me life's meaning. There were the lives of Makarius the Great, of the Tsarevich Joasafa (the story of Buddha), and there were the stories of the traveller in the wilderness and the monk who found some gold. There were stories of the martyrs, all announcing that death does not exclude life; and there were stories of ignorant, stupid men, and such as knew nothing of the teaching of the Church, but who yet were saved.

'But as soon as I met learned believers or took up the books, doubt of myself, dissatisfaction, and exasperated disputation, were roused within me, and I felt that the more I entered into the meaning of these men's speech the more I went astray from truth and approached an abyss. How often I envied the peasants their illiteracy and lack of learning! Those statements in the creed which to me were evident absurdities, for them contained nothing false. Only to me, unhappy man, was it clear that with truth falsehood was interwoven by the finest threads and that I could not accept it in this form.

'So I lived for about three years. At first when I did not understand something, I said, "It is my fault, I am

sinful"; but the more I fathomed the truth the clearer became the line between what I do not understand because I am not able to understand it, and what cannot be understood except by lying to oneself.

'In spite of my doubts and sufferings I still clung to the Russian Orthodox Church. But questions of life arose which had to be decided, and the decision of these questions by the Church contrary to the very bases of the belief by which I lived, obliged me at last to own that communion with Orthodoxy was impossible. These questions were: first the relation of the Orthodox Eastern Church to other Churches—to the Catholics and to the so-called sectarians. At that time, in consequence of my interest in religion I came into touch with believers of various faiths: Catholics, Protestants, Old-Believers, Molokáns, and others. And I met many men of lofty morals who were truly religious. I wished to be a brother to them. And what happened? The teaching which promised to unite all in one faith and love—that very teaching, in the person of its best representatives, told me that these men were all living a lie, that what gave them their power of life is a temptation of the devil, and that we alone possess the only possible truth. And I saw that all who do not profess an identical faith with themselves are considered by the Orthodox to be heretics, just as the Catholics and others consider the Orthodox to be heretics. And I saw that the Orthodox (though they try to hide this) regard with hostility all who do not express their faith by the same external symbols and words as themselves; and this is naturally so, first, because the assertion that you are in falsehood and I am in truth is the most cruel thing one man can say to another, and secondly, because a man loving his children and brothers cannot help being hostile to those who wish to pervert his children and brothers to a false belief. . . . And to me who considered that truth lay in union by love, it became self-evident that the faith was itself destroying what it ought to produce.

'As people of many different religions behave to one

another in this same contemptuous, self-assured manner; the error of such conduct was obvious; and I thought on the matter and read all I could about it and consulted all whom I could. And no one gave me any explanation except the one which causes the Súmski Hussars to consider the Súmski Hussars the best regiment in the world, and the Yellow Uhlans to consider that the best regiment in the world is the Yellow Uhlans. . . . I went to archimandrites, archbishops, elders, monks of the strictest Orders, and asked them, but none of them made any attempt to explain the matter to me, except one man who explained it all and explained it so that I never asked any one any more about it.

‘I asked him why we should not unite on those main points on which we could agree, and leave the rest for each to decide as he pleases. My interlocutor agreed with my thoughts, but told me that such concessions would bring reproach on the spiritual authorities for deserting the faith of our forefathers, and this would produce a split, and the vocation of the spiritual authorities is to safeguard in all its purity the Greco-Russian Orthodox faith inherited from our forefathers.

‘And I understood it all! I am seeking a faith, the power of life, and they are seeking the best way to fulfil before men certain human obligations. . . . And I noticed what is done in the name of religion and was horrified, and I almost entirely abjured Orthodoxy.

‘The second relation of the Church to a question of life was with regard to war and executions.

‘At that time Russia was at war. And Russians in the name of Christian love began to kill their fellow-men. It was impossible not to think about this, and not to see that killing is an evil, repugnant to the first principles of any faith. Yet they prayed in the churches for the success of our arms and the teachers of the faith acknowledged killing to be an act resulting from the faith. And besides the murders during the war, I saw, during the disturbances which followed the war, Church dignitaries and teachers and monks of the lesser and stricter Orders

who approved the killing of helpless erring youths. And I took note of all that is done by men who profess Christianity, and was horrified.

‘And I ceased to doubt and became fully convinced that not all was true in the religion I had joined. Formerly I should have said that it was all false, but I could not say so now, for I had felt its truth and had lived by it. But I no longer doubted that there is in it much that is false. And though among the peasants there was less admixture of what repelled me, still I saw that in their belief also falsehood was mixed with the truth.

‘But where did the truth and where did the falsehood come from? Both the falsehood and the truth were contained in the so-called holy tradition and Scriptures. Both the falsehood and the truth had been handed down by what is called the Church.

‘And whether I liked to or not, I was brought to the study and investigation of these writings and traditions, which till then I had been so afraid to investigate.

‘And I turned to the examination of that same theology which I had once rejected with such contempt. . . . On it religious doctrine rests, or at least with it the only knowledge of the meaning of life I have found is inseparably connected. . . . I shall not seek the explanation of everything. I know that the explanation of everything, like the commencement of everything, must be concealed in infinity. But I wish to understand in a way which will bring me to what is inevitably inexplicable. I wish to recognize anything that is inexplicable as being so not because the demands of my reason are wrong (they are right, and apart from them I can understand nothing), but because I recognize the limits of my intellect. I wish to understand in such a way that everything that is inexplicable shall present itself to me as being necessarily inexplicable, and not as being something I am under an arbitrary obligation to believe. I must find what is true and what is false and must disentangle the one from the other. I am setting to work upon this task. What of falsehood I find in the

teaching and what I find of truth and to what conclusion I come, will form the following parts of this work, which if it be worth it, and if any one wants it, will probably some day be printed somewhere.'

Those closing words, in which Tolstóy expresses the hope that his work 'will probably some day be printed somewhere', are a reminder of the difficulties and dangers that had to be encountered in Russia by any one who set out to challenge the authority of the Orthodox Church, the affairs of which were managed by the Holy Synod presided over by a Procurator who could call on the secular powers to enforce his decisions.

Confession is a work the whole of which is very well worth reading. Its autobiographic value is great. Without it one could not understand the break that occurred in Tolstóy's life at the age of fifty. It also furnishes a striking instance of Tolstóy's artistic power—making others share his own intimate feelings—and illustrates the fact that this power was not confined to his novels, stories, and plays, but is present even more conspicuously in some of the works we call didactic.

Writing his *Confession* was a brave deed few men would have had the courage to perform. In it he challenges both the authorities that compelled the allegiance of his contemporaries. It was the time when, following the publication of *The Origin of Species* and *The Descent of Man*, materialism was rampant among the intelligentsia who were confident of being able to explain man by mechanics if not to-day then assuredly to-morrow, and who—while conforming externally to the established Church—looked on any one who held a religious belief as obviously credulous, superstitious, or ignorant. So Tolstóy by this work invited the contempt of educated and learned Russia, while at the same time by challenging both the theory and practice of the Orthodox Russian Church (and incidentally of all established Churches) he ran the risk of drawing upon himself the undesirable attentions of the Holy Synod. Moreover he

could not hope that his friends would approve of his turning aside from fiction to an inquiry into life's great problem—that of our relation to the infinite.

It had been generally supposed that what was written in the form of a novel was 'art', while what was written as autobiography, or as an essay, was not art. It needed such books as *Confession* and *What Then Must We Do?* to show that the transmission of feeling (which is the very essence of art) depends not on the classification of a book, but on the way it is written.

But if Tolstóy could not hope for the approval of the scientists of the day, or of the ecclesiastics, or of his literary friends, neither could he look for sympathy in his own family. His wife adhered to the Russian Church, and her disapproval of his unorthodoxy was a first cause of the dissension between them which increased as time went on. His dearest friend, Countess Alexandra Tolstáya, was deeply pained by what she regarded as the spiritual pride he showed in condemning the tenets of the Church to which he was born. The stream of disapproval was general, and only a man of great integrity of purpose and strength of will, and one convinced of the supreme importance of the matter in hand, would have persevered in writing a work the publication of which in Russia was sure to be, and in fact was, prohibited; and which had for years to be produced and distributed clandestinely. This was done by those interested in his message, and conscious that it was one many people would be eager to read.

It was indeed a notable achievement to produce so forcible a statement of the fact that we are all so made that of necessity we approve and disapprove in a way not explicable by the physical and chemical constituents of our bodies. Society was divided into those who accepted certain dogmas because they felt religion to be a necessity of their being, and others who rejected all religion, because they considered those dogmas absurd. For a man, especially for a man of Tolstóy's eminence and persuasive power, to come between the contestants and

say clearly: You are right—religion is necessary; you are right—the dogmas of popular religion are false; was a great achievement. Had Tolstóy written no other book his name would stand out as that of a great writer, a clear thinker, and one who rendered a valuable service to mankind by showing a middle course between the two extremes.

CHAPTER XII

WORKS: 1852-78

TOLSTÓY's writings during the first twenty-five years of his literary career may be divided into six sections.

First came a series of seventeen stories and sketches beginning with *Childhood* and ending with *Family Happiness*. Next his series of educational articles in the *Yásnaya Polyána* magazine. Thirdly *The Cossacks* (the finest story he had yet written) and *Polikúshka*. Fourth came *War and Peace*. Fifth the *ABC Book*, the *Readers*, and another article on Education; and sixth came *Anna Karénina*.

Putting the educational works aside the list can be reduced to nineteen stories and sketches followed by two great novels.

The nineteen sketches and stories, 'trials of the pen' as he called them, covered a wide range, from charmingly realistic sketches of childhood to vigorous presentations of Cossack life, and they showed their writer as an amazingly accurate observer of physical facts and qualities, manners, tones, and gestures, and possessed of a yet more wonderful knowledge of the hearts and minds of all sorts and conditions of men, from the shame-faced child to the officer dying on the field of battle.

What is most remarkable in *Childhood*, *Boyhood*, and *Youth*, and in an even earlier posthumously published fragment, *The Story of Yesterday*, is, as Prince Mirsky has observed, that Tolstóy from the very start adopted a manner of his own differing from that of his predecessors. His stories are as straightforward as everyday life, and as unsensational. It is the play of feeling—the intimate revelation of the hearts and minds of his characters—that constitutes their charm. They therefore call for very exact translation and for more deliberate and observant perusal than sensational stories do, which rely on intricate plots; and many a hasty reader taking up

a story by Tolstóy for the first time and expecting a different sort of book may have experienced disappointment, though a sensitive reader will have found in it a charm lacking in commonplace fiction.

After *Childhood* came *The Raid*, one of the four stories he wrote of army life in the Caucasus: the others being *The Wood-Felling*, *Meeting a Moscow Acquaintance in the Detachment*, and finally *Hadji Murad* (published posthumously) which, though a more finished story, bears a striking resemblance to the sketches written fifty years before. These four stories are also intimate and sympathetic psychological studies revealing the secret feelings of the characters he observed.

Next after *The Raid* came *Boyhood*, a continuation of *Childhood*, and then *Reminiscences of a Billiard-Marker*, dealing with the temperament of a gambler as observed by a marker at a public billiard room.

After this came the three *Sevastopol* sketches, the first two written during the siege itself, and the third immediately after the town had been abandoned. Here Tolstóy again introduced a new method and set a new standard of war literature. His sketches concern themselves not with laudation of war, but with the portrayal of the feelings of those who risked and sometimes lost their lives in the struggle. The exactness of the description in *Sevastopol* made the ordinary run of war stories seem childish. Its influence has been great and may last as long as war—and man's doubts of the legitimacy of war—endure.

Next we have *The Snow Storm*, spoken of in a previous chapter, and *Two Hussars*, a rollicking story somewhat in the style of Charles Lever. Standing alone of its kind among Tolstóy's works, it exhibits a bold type of Russian officer, gifted, dashing, attractive, but quite unrestrained and reckless.

A Landlord's Morning is a convincing study of the relations of a well-meaning proprietor with the serfs he wishes to help. Its condemnation of serfdom is the more convincing because the picture is seen from the landlord's side.

Throughout these stories, and in fact throughout all Tolstóy's writings, one can observe an autobiographical element, but though he utilizes his own experiences, and the feeling expressed by his heroes is often his own, the stories are works of imagination and one has to be constantly on one's guard against writers who devise a formula and proceed to fit it on to Tolstóy, giving their attempts plausibility by quoting words 'he himself has said', without warning their readers that the words they quote are those of imaginary characters, and that Tolstóy had so complex a character, with so many phases, that to fit a formula on to him is not to explain him but to misrepresent what he really was.

After *A Landlord's Morning* came *Youth*, a sequel to *Childhood* and *Boyhood*, and then *Lucerne*—closely describing an actual occurrence at the Schweizerhof Hotel, when Tolstóy's acute susceptibility to music, combined with his ready response to immediate want—natural in a humane man from a country with no organized system of relief for destitution—came sharply in conflict with the lack of artistic sensibility, and the reluctance to encourage vagrancy, that he encountered among the English and other guests at the hotel.

His next story, again influenced by the hold music had on him, was *Albert*, based on his experience with Rudolf, the talented but drunken violinist he had encountered in Petersburg and had taken to Yásnaya Polyána.

Three Deaths is an admirable study of the death of a wealthy woman, of a peasant post-boy, and of an old tree, all observed with characteristic penetration and described with masterly skill.

Family Happiness, the most finished novel he had yet produced and the one which by its construction came nearest to an ordinary English novel, appeared next. It has already been mentioned, based as it is on his own affair with Valérya, he presents the story from the woman's side. It is noteworthy that he often looked at things through the eyes of a peasant, a child, a girl, an old woman, a dying man, or even a horse—a method

made possible by the strength of his imagination and the penetrating power of his observation and reflection.

Next came *The Cossacks*, largely based on his own life in a Cossack village. This full-blooded story has been much praised, and is an admirable work, but owing to circumstances already mentioned, its intended sequel was never written.

Last in the series we have *Polikúshka*, a very remarkable work in which we find an early example of that caustic humour of which Tolstóy made much use later on and at the touch of which all that is pretentious, artificial, or insincere seems to wither to dust. It is amazing how in a few words in this story a whole group of people are characterized and brought to life with all their peculiarities; and how tragedy and humour blend in this convincing tale of serfdom.

His great novels bear out the promise of his short stories, with the added power of maturity.

Prince Mirsky gave a lecture to the Tolstóy Society, of which I only have rough notes, but he put the matter so well that, as far as I can, I will here reproduce the substance of what he said of Tolstóy's earlier period of literary work:

"Tolstóy heralded a change in the texture of novels, from the old dramatic method (which was still the method of Dostoevski) to a new method—"the point-of-view method". The dramatic method consists of giving the actions and words of the characters without an explanation. Tolstóy, in his earlier period, never gives the actions or words of his characters without an explanation. With him the psychological explanation is the important thing. What is important is not what his people do, it is why they do it that matters. This first period of his work, covering the years 1852-77, falls into two parts: a preparatory period, and a period of fulfilment. The first is the period before *War and Peace*; the second that of *War and Peace*, and *Anna Karénina*.

'In the first period Tolstóy was only preparing himself

for his great works. His first object was the formation of a technique of analysis by which he could lay his finger on the mechanism of the internal preparation of human action. It is amusing how he revels in the classification of various types of character, for example in the stories written about 1855, especially the Caucasus and Sevastopol stories. He was gradually perfecting an instrument of analysis which allowed him to go far deeper than any one before him into the lower layers of consciousness. This gives Tolstóy the specious appearance of a man who was particularly near to un-reasoning life. This is a very easy but a very bad fallacy to fall into. In the early stories Tolstóy's analysis does not result in the creation of character. This is particularly true of *Sevastopol* and the moralizing stories between that and *War and Peace*. His analysis is abstract in that it isolates the psychological fact, that it loses all its actual appearance, all the form in which it appears in actual life. But on the other hand he goes to the original fact, and by a new combination of these divided particles of reality creates a new concrete reality. His work during this preparatory period is on the whole free from all considerations of construction.

Turning to the second period, that of the great novels, in *War and Peace* this instrument of analysis is fully perfected and is now only a means to an end, not an end in itself. The nearest approach to *War and Peace* in the period before Tolstóy would be the old family novels of Charlotte Yonge for example, taken, that is, purely as a literary form. Compare the construction of *War and Peace* and *The Daisy Chain*. The differences are two. First, Tolstóy has gone through a period of preparation in his early work which Miss Yonge had not, and he had an instrument of construction superior even to Stendhal's. Secondly, Tolstóy placed his novel in an historical setting. This is one of the most vital points of *War and Peace*, though it has often been said that Tolstóy had no sense of 'historicity'. But he had another sense of history, an acute sense of the uninterrupted stream of

happenings, of time. It is this placing of the family novel, based on a thorough-going explanatory analysis of action in this stream of time, that gives *War and Peace* its peculiar place in the history of the novel. Tolstóy created something that may be said to be no longer a novel—it is the open form of the novel as opposed to the closed form. Flaubert, in *Madame Bovary*, was bringing this (the closed) form to perfection. It had a beginning, a middle, and an end, a single *jet* ending in a definite solution of the conflicts inside the novel. Tolstóy in *War and Peace* transcends the limit of the novel and does what had previously been done by the epic. It is as though we had observed a section of a flowing river from one spot to another, conscious that the river neither began nor ended at these points.

‘Thus *War and Peace* must be put in a group not with *Madame Bovary*, *Vanity Fair*, or *The Mill on the Floss*, but with the *Iliad*, in the sense that when the novel is finished nothing is finished, the stream of life flows on. Take for example the appearance of Prince Andrew’s son—the novel ends on the beginning of a new life. There are all the time openings out of the story on to the outer world. This is a thing that had never been attempted by historical novelists before Tolstóy. Another thing which differentiates *War and Peace* is its religion, which is quite different from the religion of Tolstóy’s last years. The religious message of *War and Peace* is that the only fundamental obligation of man is to be in tune with life. This relation between the individual and the whole again gives *War and Peace* its openings.’

Tolstóy’s works from the first interested Russia, and now interest the world, because in greater measure than any of his predecessors he possesses the capacity to feel intensely, note accurately, and think deeply. The combination which makes him so interesting is the scientific accuracy of his observation (which never allows him to take liberties with his characters or events in order to make out a case for the side he sympathizes with) and

the fact that he is mightily in earnest. Life to him is important, and art is the handmaid of life. He wants to discern what is good and what is bad; to help the former and resist the latter. His work tends to evolve order out of life's chaos, and as that is the most important thing a man can do, his books are among the most interesting and important in modern literature. He makes no pretence of standing aloof, cutting off his art from his life, or concealing his desire that kindness should prevail over cruelty. Life interests him, and therefore the reflection of life interests him, and the problems of art are the problems of life: love and passion and death and the desire to do right.

The chief subject appearing again and again throughout the stories he wrote before *War and Peace* is the mental striving of a young Russian nobleman to free himself from the artificial futilities of the society in which he was born, and to see and do what is right. The search is only partially successful. The indictment of society is often convincing, but the heroes' failures and perplexities are frankly admitted. Sometimes there is no hero. In *Sevastopol*, for instance, he exclaims: 'Where in this tale is the evil shown that should be avoided? Where is the good that should be imitated? Who is the villain, who the hero of the story? All are good and all are bad;' and in *Lucerne* he says: 'Who has in his soul so immovable a *standard of good and evil* that by it he can measure the passing facts of life?'

This searching for what is good and rejecting what is false—resulting in a strong distrust and dislike of the predatory masterful domineering types of humanity and in general of what has usually been regarded as the heroic type, and in a friendly compassion for all that is humble, simple, forbearing, and sincere—is the keynote of Tolstóy's early tales. They are studies of life. The characters seem to have an independent life of their own; they speak for themselves, and at times like Balaam, bless what they were apparently expected to curse. For instance, when Prince Nekhlyudov insists on bringing

the wandering musician into the Schweizerhof Hotel in *Lucerne*, we feel how uncomfortable he thereby makes the poor singer, though that is evidently not what Tolstóy set out to make us feel.

War and Peace, besides being maturer than the preceding tales, was composed during the early years of Tolstóy's married life when he felt more content with himself and with life in general, and his attitude towards existing things was more tolerant and sympathetic than it had been or than it was in later years.

He told me that in *War and Peace* and *Anna Karénina* his aim was simply to amuse his readers. One is bound to accept the statement, but it is only necessary to read either of those books to see that in them Tolstóy's ardent nature found vent for all its likes and dislikes, strivings, yearnings, hopes, and fears.

I asked Tolstóy why in *What is Art?* he relegates these novels to the realm of 'bad art', and his answer showed, as I expected, that he did not consider them at all bad, but condemned them merely as being too long, and written in a manner chiefly adapted for the leisured, well-to-do classes who have time to read novels in several volumes because other people do their rough work for them. Of *War and Peace* he said, 'It is, one would think, harmless enough, but one never knows how things will affect people', and he went on to mention with regret that one of Professor Zahárin's daughters had told him that from his novels she had acquired a love of balls and parties—things of which, at the time of our conversation, he heartily disapproved.

The mighty drama of the Napoleonic advance from 1805 to 1812 comes into the novel in so far as it affected the members of the Rostóv and Bolkónski families.

The main theme of the novel, if one may select a main theme from the many latent in the story, is Tolstóy's favourite thesis. He tacitly asks: What is good and what is bad? With what must we sympathize and what must we reject? And the reply is that the predatory, artificial types, exemplified historically by the invading French,

as well as by such Russian characters as Hélène, Anatole, and Dólokhov, are repugnant to him, while he loves the humble, the meek, and the sincere: Márya and Platon Karatáev, Natásha (so impulsive and charming in her youth, so absorbed in her family later), and Pierre (who is often humble, always sincere, and devoted to ideas and ideals).

The book introduces many characters, all of them so distinctly drawn that we know them better than we know our personal acquaintances. It treats of life's deepest experiences from the cradle to the grave, and to read it with care is to know life better, and see it more sanely and seriously, than one did before.

Tolstóy is probably justified in claiming that his history is truer than the historians' history of the battles of Schönggraben, Austerlitz, and Borodinó. N. N. Muravyóv, a Commander-in-Chief who distinguished himself in more than one war, declared he had never read a better description of a battle than Tolstóy's account of Schönggraben, and added that he was convinced from his own experience that during a battle it is impossible to carry out a Commander-in-Chief's orders.

When he wrote the book Tolstóy believed war to be inevitable. The idea that it is man's duty to resist it and to refuse to take part in it came to him later.

Yet his inveterate truthfulness and personal knowledge of war, caused him to describe it so exactly that the result is tantamount to a condemnation. As Kropótkin remarked, *War and Peace* is a powerful indictment of war. The effect the great writer exercised in this direction upon his generation could be actually seen in Russia. It was apparent during the Russo-Turkish war of 1877-8, when it was impossible to find in Russia a correspondent who would have described how 'we peppered the enemy with grape-shot', or how 'we knocked them down like ninepins'.

Tolstóy told me he considered the defect of the book, besides its length, to be the intrusion of a philosophic

argument into the story. He still held the opinions he had held when he wrote it as to the influence or impotence of 'great' men and all that he then said about destiny and free will, but he realized that the novel would have been better without these abstract disquisitions.

The characters in the book are not strictly copied from life, but in the main Tolstóy's father's family and to some extent his wife's are represented by the Rostóvs, and his mother's family by the Bolkónskis. To a large extent the old Prince N. Bolkónski is drawn from Tolstóy's grandfather, Prince N. Volkónski; the daughter, Princess Márya, from Tolstóy's mother, the old Count Ilyá A. Rostóv from Tolstóy's grandfather, Count Ilyá A. Tolstóy; his son Count Nicholas Rostóv from Tolstóy's father, Count Nicholas Tolstóy; Natásha from Tolstóy's sister-in-law, Tatiána Behrs; Sónya from his 'auntie' Tatiána Érgolskaya. Dólokhov is a combination of Count Theodore Tolstóy, a famous and eccentric traveller, and R. I. Dórokhov, a notorious dare-devil of Alexander I's days.

Many even of the minor characters, such as Mlle Bourienne, and Ivánushka, the woman pilgrim in man's clothes, are copied from people connected with the Volkónskis' home at Yásnaya Polyána.

The novel covers nearly the whole range of Tolstóy's own experience of life: in it we have the aristocracy and the peasants; town life and country life; the commanders, officers, and privates of the army, in action and out of action; the diplomatists and courtiers; flirtation, love balls, hunting, and a reform movement which is mainly talk. What Tolstóy does not show is what he did not know—the middle-class world: the world of merchants, manufacturers, engineers, and men of business. Of course these in Russia a hundred years ago played a comparatively small part; there was practically no political activity such as that of our County Councils, Borough Councils, and Parliament. But that all this was absent from Tolstóy's mind, and that his outlook on life was

confined to the aristocracy which consumed and the peasantry which produced will in the sequel help us to understand the social teaching to which he ultimately came. His brother-in-law tells us that Leo Tolstóy

has in my presence confessed to being both proud and vain. He was a rampant aristocrat, and though he always loved the country folk, he loved the aristocracy still more. To the middle class he was antipathetic. When after his failures in early life he became widely famous as a writer, he used to admit that it gave him great pleasure and intense happiness. In his own words, he was pleased to feel that he was both a writer and a noble.

When he heard of any of his former comrades or acquaintances receiving important appointments, his comments reminded one of those of Suvórov [the great Field-Marshal of Catherine the Great's time], who always maintained that at Court one received promotion for cringing and flattery but never for good work. Sometimes he would ironically remark that though he had himself not earned a Generalship in the artillery, he had at any rate won his Generalship in literature.

A simple world of nobles and peasants, with little organization and that of a poor kind: a world the evils of which were mitigated by much kindness and good intention, and in which on the whole the less the Government interfered with anybody or anything the better—such was old Russia as it existed under Alexander I, and as it still existed when Tolstóy was young. He has described it with extraordinary vividness, and has made it possible for us to picture to ourselves a country and an age unlike our own. What effect the limitation of his outlook referred to above had on the subsequent development of his opinions need not here be considered. It does not spoil the novel, for no novel can show the whole of life, but it had a serious effect on the formulation of his later philosophy. Of certain important types of humanity he had hardly any conception. Of the George Stephenson type, for instance, which masters the brute forces of nature and harnesses them to the service of man—doing this primarily from love of efficient work—he knows nothing; nor does he know anything

of the Sidney Webb type, which sets itself the difficult task of evolving social order out of the partial chaos of modern civilization; nor of the best type of organizers in our great industrial undertakings: men whose hearts are set on getting much work well done with little friction and little waste, and to whom the successful accomplishment of a difficult project gives more satisfaction than any effortless acquisition of wealth could do. Tolstóy over-simplified life's problems. He made a sharp contrast between the predatory and the humble types, and there is much truth in his presentation. He is right that life is supported by the humble and rendered hard by the predatory types, but he has omitted from his scheme of things the man of organizing mind: the man who knows how to get his way and generally gets it (or a good deal of it) but does this mainly from worthy motives; the man who is not perfect, who may take more than is good for him and may have some of the tendencies of the predatory type, but who on the whole is worth and more than worth, his salt, and but for whom there would be greater chaos and less order in the world. Tolstóy said in one of his later writings that the cause of the Russian famines was the Greek Church; and he was right. All that stupefies, and all that impedes thought, tends to make men inefficient even in their agricultural operations. But by parity of reasoning he might have seen that the introduction of thought into methods of production, distribution, and exchange which has during the last hundred and fifty years so revolutionized our Western world, should not be condemned as bad in itself, however ugly many of its manifestations may be and however often we may see the organizing and the predatory types exemplified in one and the same person.

I cannot comment on *War and Peace* better than I did in a preface I wrote to a former edition of that novel, where following the lines of what N. Strákhov had written, I said

'The work was begun when Tolstóy was thirty-five and he was generally in good spirits while writing it.

‘Nothing can be simpler than most of the occurrences of *War and Peace*. Everyday events of family life: conversations between brother and sister, or mother and daughter, separations and reunions, hunting, holiday festivities, dances, card-playing, and so forth, are all as lovingly shaped into artistic gems as is the battle of Borodinó itself. Whatever the purpose of the book may be its success depends not on that purpose but on what Tolstóy did under its influence, that is to say it depends on a highly artistic execution.

‘If Tolstóy succeeds in fixing our gaze on what occupied his soul, it is because he had full command of his instrument—which was art. Not many readers probably are concerned about the thoughts that directed and animated the author, but all are impressed by his creation. Men of all camps—those who like as well as those who dislike his later works—unite in tribute to the extraordinary mastery shown in this remarkable production. It is a notable example of the irresistible and all-conquering power of art.

‘But such art does not arise of itself, nor can it exist apart from deep thought and deep feeling. What is it that strikes every one in *War and Peace*? It is its clearness of form and vividness of colour. It is as though one saw what is described and heard the sounds that are uttered. The author hardly speaks in his own person; he brings forward the characters and then allows them to speak, feel, and act; and they do it so that every movement is true and amazingly exact, in full accord with the character of those portrayed. It is as if we had to do with real people, and saw them more clearly than one can see in real life. We not only distinguish the form of expression and the feeling of each actor, but their manner, their favourite gestures, and their way of walking. The important Prince Vasíly on one occasion, in unusual and difficult circumstances, had to walk on tip-toe. The author knows just how each of his characters walks. “Prince Vasíly”, we are told, “could not walk well on tip-toe, and his whole body jerked at each step.” With

similar clearness and distinctness the author knows the movements, feelings, and thoughts of all those whom he depicts. When once they are before us he does not interfere with them, but lets each behave as is natural to him.

‘Similarly Tolstóy usually describes scenes or scenery only as reflected in the mind of one of his characters. He does not describe the oak that stood beside the road, or the moonlight night when neither Natásha nor Prince Andrew could sleep; but he describes the impressions the oak and the night made on Prince Andrew. The battles and historic events are usually described not by informing us of the author’s conception of them, but by the impression they produce on the characters in the story. The battle of Schöngraben is described chiefly by the impression it made on Prince Andrew; Austerlitz by its impression on Nicholas Rostóv; the Emperor’s appearance in Moscow by the excitement it produced in Pétya; and the effect of the prayer against invasion by the feelings of Natásha. Tolstóy nowhere appears behind the actors or draws events in the abstract; he shows them in the flesh and blood of those who supplied the material for the events.

‘In this respect the work is an artistic marvel. Tolstóy has seized not some separate traits but a whole living atmosphere, which varies around different individuals and different classes of society. He himself mentions the ‘loving family atmosphere’ of the Rostóvs’ house, but there are other instances: the atmosphere surrounding Speránski, or that surrounding the Rostóvs’ “uncle”; that of the Big Theatre in Moscow when Natásha went to the opera; of the military hospital Nicholas visited; of a crowded bridge when the French were preparing to fire on it, and so on. The characters who enter each of these atmospheres, or pass from one of them to another, inevitably experience their influence, and so do we with them.

‘In this way the highest objectivity is attained; we not only have before us the actions, figures, movements, and speech of the actors, but their whole inner life is shown us by equally clear and distinct traits—their souls

and hearts are bared to our view. Reading *War and Peace* we *contemplate*, in the full meaning of that word, the object the artist has depicted. Tolstóy is an admirable realist who shows us alike the excellent and the contemptible traits in his characters. He does not spare us Natásha's infatuation for Anatole, or pretend that as the mother of a family she retained her youthful charm; and while he thus treats his most attractive characters he does full justice to the courage, firmness, and leadership of the rascally card-sharper Dólokhov. Again, no one can doubt his sympathy for his country exposed to Napoleon's invasion, yet he never yields to the temptation to offer incense at the shrine of patriotic pride while depicting Russia's deliverance from a foreign yoke. How faithfully he deals with the shady aspects of Russian army life and its many defects!

'The finest shades of spiritual life and its profoundest upheavals are alike depicted with clearness and fidelity. The feeling of holiday dullness in the Rostóvs' house at Otrádnœ, and the feelings of the Russian army in the heat of the battle of Borodinó; Natásha's youthful perturbations, and the excitement of old Bolkónski when his memory was failing and he was on the verge of apoplexy; are all vivid, living, and exact, in Tolstóy's narration.

'That is where the author's interest centres and consequently his reader's interest also. However important and great the events treated of—whether it be the Krémelin crowded with people on the occasion of the Tsar's visit, or the meeting of the two emperors, or a terrible battle with guns roaring and thousands of men dying—nothing deflects the author, or his readers with him, from steady observation of the inner spirit of the individual characters. It is as if he were concerned only with the effect the occurrences produce on the soul of man—only with what each soul felt and contributed to the event.

'Tolstóy undertook to present the most heroic period of Russian history, and he emerged triumphant from the contest with the difficulties of his theme.

'We have before us a marvellous panorama of the Russia that withstood Napoleon's invasion and dealt a death-blow to his power. The picture is painted without exaggeration and shows many of the shadows and ugly, pitiful features belonging to the mental, moral, and political relations of that day. But at the same time the strength that saved Russia is indicated in a manner that by contrast with the present makes the book painful reading for lovers of Russia to-day.

'The soul of man is depicted in *War and Peace* with unparalleled reality. It is not life in the abstract that is shown, but creatures fully defined with all their limitations of place, time, and circumstance. For instance, we see how individuals *grow*. Natásha running into the drawing-room with her doll, in Book I, and Natásha entering the church, in Book IX, are really one and the same person at two different ages, and not merely two different ages attributed to a single person, such as one often encounters in fiction. The author has also shown us the intermediate stages of this development. In the same way Nicholas Rostóv develops; Pierre from being a young man becomes a Moscow magnate; old Bolkónski grows senile and so forth.

'The spiritual peculiarities of Tolstóy's characters are so clearly perceptible, so individual, that we can notice the *family likeness* of those who are blood relations. Old Bolkónski and Prince Andrew are evidently of similar nature, though one is young and the other old. The Rostóv family, despite the great divergence of its members, presents features common to them all, and so remarkably reproduced that they merge into shades one feels but cannot describe. For instance, we can feel that even the unsympathetic Vera may be a real Rostóv, while the much more attractive Sónya's mentality evidently springs from a different root.

'The non-Russians present a very trying test, for had Tolstóy been content to give a conventionally Russian view of the nationalities presented, we, from our English

point of view, should at once note the artificiality of such a presentation. But take, for instance, the French Mlle Bourienne or Napoleon himself; the Austrian and German generals Mack and Pfuell, or Adolph Berg, and (though we to-day may feel more respect for German military capacity than Tolstóy felt in the 'sixties) we readily recognize the Frenchness of the Frenchman and the Germanity of the Germans. As to the Russians in the book, not only is every one of them thoroughly Russian but even the class and condition to which each of them belongs is readily distinguishable. For instance, Speránski, little as we see of him, is from head to foot a 'Seminarist', the product of a theological college.

'And all that passes in their minds, each feeling, passion, or agitation, is distinct and true. Tolstóy never makes the common mistake of representing a single state of mind as always prevailing in the soul of any of his heroes. Think for instance of Natásha, whose spirit is so intense and full; in her soul everything is ardent: her vanity, her love of her betrothed, her gaiety, her thirst for life, her deep affection for her relations, and so on. Or think of Prince Andrew when he stood over the smoking shell. "Can this be death?" thought Prince Andrew, looking with a quite new, envious glance at the grass, the wormwood, and the streamlet of smoke that curled up from the revolving black ball. 'I cannot—do not wish—to die; I love life, love this grass, this ground, this air.' . . . He thought this *and at the same time remembered that men were looking at him.*" Or take the feeling of animosity Prince Andrew nursed towards Kurágin, with its strange contradictions, or the changes of feeling in the Princess Márya: religious, amorous, filially devoted, and so forth.

'The dignity of man is hidden from us either by all kinds of defects or by the fact that we esteem other qualities too highly and therefore measure men by their cleverness, strength, beauty, and so forth. Tolstóy teaches us to penetrate beneath their externality. What can be simpler, more ordinary, and, so to say, meeker than the figures of Nicholas Rostóv and the Princess

Márya? They have no brilliance, no ability, and do not stand out from the most ordinary level of ordinary folk. Yet these simple people, who go quietly along the simplest of life's roads, are evidently admirable souls. The irresistible sympathy with which the author has surrounded these two, who seem so small but are really the peers of any in spiritual beauty, is one of the masterly achievements of *War and Peace*. Nicholas Rostóv is evidently a man of very limited ability, but, as the author says, "he had that common sense of mediocrity which showed him what he ought to do".

'And really Nicholas does many stupid things and does not show much understanding of people or circumstances, but he always understands what ought to be done, and this invaluable wisdom always preserves the purity of his simple and ardent nature.

'Is there any need to speak of the Princess Márya? Despite her weakness, this figure (which represented what Tolstóy treasured as the image of the mother he had lost before he was two years old) attains such purity and mildness that at times she seems to wear the halo of a saint.

'Then again Tolstóy is most masterly in the presentment of what is hidden in the soul of man beneath the play of passion, beneath his egotism, avarice, and animal desires. Very pitiful, very senseless, are the passions which lead Pierre and Natásha astray; but the reader sees that behind it all these people have hearts of gold, and one never for a moment doubts that when a demand comes for self-sacrifice, or when there is a call for boundless sympathy with what is good and admirable, these hearts will yield warm and ready response. The spiritual beauty of these two is remarkable. Pierre—a grown-up child with an enormous body and terrible sensuality, impracticable and unreasonable as a child—unites in himself a child-like purity and tenderness of soul with a mind that is naïve but for that very reason lofty, and a character to which everything dishonourable is not merely foreign but even incomprehensible. He has a

child-like absence of fear and unconsciousness of evil. Natásha is a girl gifted with such fullness of spiritual life that, in Pierre's words, *she does not deign to be clever*, that is, she has neither the time nor the desire to convert this fullness of life into abstract forms of thought. Her measureless plenitude of life—which at times brings her into a state of "intoxication" (to translate exactly the word employed in the Russian original)—leads her into the terrible mistake of her senseless passion for Kurágin—a mistake afterwards redeemed by severe suffering. Pierre and Natásha were people who by their very natures were bound to commit many mistakes and encounter much disillusionment. As if in contrast to them the author introduces the happy couple Véra and Adolph Berg—people who commit no mistakes, encounter no disillusionment, and arrange their life most comfortably. One cannot but be amazed at the restraint with which Tolstóy, exhibiting all the paltriness and pettiness of these souls, never once yields to the temptation of treating them with ridicule or anger. This is true realism and real truth! With similar truthfulness are the Kurágin, Hélène and Anatole, depicted; these heartless creatures are exhibited unsparingly, but with no desire to belabour them.

'Amid all the diversity of people and events, we feel the presence of some firm and indestructible principles on which their lives rest. Family, social, and marital obligations are clearly discernible. The conceptions of good and evil are clear and durable. Having shown us the artificial life of the higher spheres of society and of the various staffs surrounding exalted personages, Tolstóy sets in contrast two firm and real spheres of life—family life and life in the active army. The two families, the Rostóvs and the Bolkónskis, present us with life directed by clear, indubitable principles, in the fulfilment of which the members of these families set their duty and honour, their dignity and satisfaction. Similarly army life (which Tolstóy in one place compares to a swarm) presents us with a quite definite conception of duty and

human dignity; so that the simple-minded Nicholas on one occasion even prefers to remain in the regiment rather than return home, where he does not see clearly what his conduct should be.

‘Tolstóy is peculiarly Russian and may at times be read to find the differences of thought and feeling that separate Russians from ourselves; but what is more remarkable is the way his penetration to the very souls of men convinces us that his Russians are of one nature with ourselves, and that the power that created us made “of one blood all nations of men”, however we may vary superficially.’

War and Peace presents us with a complete picture of human life; a complete picture of the Russia of those days; a complete historic picture of the struggle of nations; and a complete picture of the things in which men set their happiness and greatness, their sorrow and their shame. It is a work so amazingly great that though many have *felt* its greatness, few have *understood* how great it is. Tolstóy is one who reveals the secrets of life and death. The meaning of history, the strength of nations, the mystery of death, the reality of love and family life—such are the subjects he deals with. Are these matters so easy that every casual reader may take up the book in an idle hour expecting to fathom them? Is it strange that *War and Peace* should prove both a touchstone testing the quality of its critics and a stumbling-block to many who undertake to judge it?

In judging of such a work one should tread with caution, but we think a Russian critic judged well when he said that the meaning of the book is best summed up in Tolstóy’s own words, ‘There is no greatness without simplicity, goodness, and truth’.

Napoleon was too generally accepted as a great man for Tolstóy not to feel sceptical of his quality, and Napoleon was precisely of the selfishly aggressive type, pouring out the lives of others like water, whom Tolstóy (who also hated Peter the Great) instinctively detested. But while one admits this, one recognizes that his act

of indictment is admirably drawn and contains much truth. Tolstóy was scrupulously careful as to the actual incidents of the historic scenes depicted, and never puts a remark into the mouth of an historical character for which he had not good warrant.

Outside Russia, *Anna Karénina* is perhaps more popular than *War and Peace*. The former is a long novel, but not nearly as long as the latter, and though it contains philosophic disquisitions, these fit better into the story and are shorter and clearer than the philosophic chapters in *War and Peace*. In arrangement, again, *Anna Karénina* is more like the novels we are accustomed to, though instead of one hero and one heroine it has two pairs of lovers, living quite different lives and not very closely connected.

It deals with the passionate love of a beautiful and attractive woman; and it has a further interest in the fact that Lévin, to a greater degree than any of the author's other characters, represents Tolstóy himself; though Tolstóy has made Lévin a very simple fellow in order to get a more effective contrast between him and the representatives of high life in Moscow and Petersburg.

Anna Karénina was introduced to the English reading public by Matthew Arnold in an essay which is one of the best ever written about Tolstóy. It is so good that I may be excused for mentioning a point on which it is misleading.

A sentence in it which has done harm is that in which he speaks about translations: 'I use the French translation; in general work of this kind is better done in France than in England, and *Anna Karénine* is perhaps also a novel which goes better into French than into English.'

It is true enough that the early English translations of Tolstóy were very poor. But Arnold was wrong in supposing that *Anna Karénina* would naturally go better into French than into English. Had he been able to read the original he would have seen that in Tolstóy's novels there are two sets of people: a Court set who continually speak French and are Frenchified, and a plain, homely,

straightforward Russian (I had almost said, English) set who seldom use French phrases, and are sharply contrasted with the others. This contrast can be made clear in an English version, but is difficult to deal with in a version where the characters have all to speak French. The case is worse than that, however: Arnold did not say, as he fairly might, that up to his time the French versions were less bad than the English; he speaks as though it were in the nature of things that translations into French must be better than translations into English. A statement of that kind diverts attention from the fact that the French translations of Tolstóy are for the most part unsatisfactory, while some English translations are good. I recently received a letter from Mme Guermanova of the Moscow Art Theatre, in which she—who often reads passages from Tolstóy's novels to literary gatherings in the different countries she visits—mentions that she cannot find adequate French versions of her favourite passages, but that she likes our versions and would willingly make use of them. For people to assume that they have read a reliable version because they have read it in French (often without so much as noticing the translator's name) is silly.

It is so important, if justice is to be done to Tolstóy, that readers should have some guidance in the selection of versions they read, that the matter is separately dealt with in this volume, in Appendix B.

W. D. Howells who stood sponsor for Tolstóy in America as Matthew Arnold did in England, very truly says: 'It is Tolstóy's humanity which is the grace beyond the reach of art in his imaginative work. It does not reach merely the poor and the suffering; it extends to the prosperous and the proud, and does not deny itself to the guilty. There had been many stories of adultery before *Anna Karénina*, nearly all the great novels outside of English are framed upon that argument, but in *Anna Karénina* for the first time the whole truth was told about it. Tolstóy has said of the fiction of Maupassant that the whole truth can never be immoral; and in his own

work I have felt that it could never be anything but moral.'

Arnold is rather shocked that Anna should yield so quickly and easily to the persuasions of Vrónski. He is quite sure that she ought to have resisted. But here we come to a matter on which many Russians disapprove of Tolstóy on just the opposite ground. Kropótkin in his *Ideals and Realities in Russian Literature* has stated their case, and this is the substance of what he says:

Anna Karénina produced in Russia an impression which brought Tolstóy congratulations from the reactionary camp and a very cool reception from the advanced portion of society. The fact is that the question of marriage and of the separation of husband and wife, had been most earnestly debated in Russia by the best men and women, both in literature and in life. Levity towards marriage such as is continually unveiled in the Divorce Courts was decidedly condemned, as also was any form of deceit such as supplies the subject for countless French novels and plays. But after levity and deceit had been condemned, the right of a new love—appearing perhaps after years of happy married life—was seriously considered. Chernyshévski's novel, *What to do?* may be taken as the best expression of the opinions on marriage which became current among the better portion of the young generation. Once married, it was said, don't take lightly to love affairs or flirtation. Not every fit of passion deserves the name of a new love; and what is called love is often merely temporary desire. Even if it be real, before it has grown deep there is generally time to reflect on the consequences that would result were it allowed to grow. But when all is said and done, there are cases when a new love does come, and comes almost inevitably: as for instance when a girl has been married almost against her will under the continued insistence of her lover, or when the two have married without properly understanding one another, or when one of the two has continued to progress towards an ideal, while the other, after having worn the mask of idealism, falls back into the Philistine happiness of warmed slippers. In such cases separation not only becomes inevitable, but is often to the interest of both. It would be better for both to live through the suffering a separation involves (honest natures are improved by such suffering) than to spoil the entire subsequent life of one—or

both in most cases—and to face the evil consequences which living together under such circumstances would be sure to produce on the children. That at any rate was the conclusion to which, both in literature and in life, the best portion of Russian society came.

And into the society Kropótkin describes in that statement comes Tolstóy with *Anna Karénina*. The epigraph of the book is 'Vengeance is mine, I will repay', and death by suicide is the fate of poor Anna, who was married young to an old and unattractive man and had never known love till she met Vrónski. Deceit was not in her nature. To maintain a conventional marriage would not have made her husband or child happier. Separation and a new life with Vrónski, who seriously loved her, was the only possible outcome. At any rate, continues Kropótkin, if the story of *Anna Karénina* had to end in tragedy, it was not in consequence of an act of supreme justice. The artistic genius of Tolstóy, honest here as everywhere, itself indicated the real cause, in the inconsistency of Vrónski and Anna. After leaving her husband and defying public opinion—that is, as Tolstóy shows, the opinion of women not honest enough to have a right to a voice in the matter—neither she nor Vrónski had the courage to break right away from that society, the futility of which Tolstóy describes so exquisitely. Instead of that, when Anna returns with Vrónski to Petersburg, their chief preoccupation is, how Betsy and other such women will receive her if she reappears among them? 'And it was the opinion of the Betsies—surely not Superhuman Justice—which brought Anna to suicide.'

Whether Matthew Arnold's view or Kropótkin's be accepted, Tolstóy at any rate does full justice to Anna's charm: 'her large, fresh, rich, generous, delightful nature which keeps our sympathy' and even our respect; there is no nonsense about her being a degraded or vile person. And after all, Tolstóy's view of marriage sanctity is a very old and a very widely held one; and it is surely good to have that side of the case put so artistically, so persuasively, so well, as he puts it. If ultimately the idea

that two uncongenial people ought to live out their lives together because they have been married has to be abandoned, let it not be abandoned without the best advocates being heard in its defence.

As to what Tolstóy meant by the epigraph 'Vengeance is mine, I will repay'—this was better understood by Dostoévski than by Kropótkin. Here is a condensation of what Dostoévski wrote:

Anna Karénina as an artistic production is perfection. It appears most opportunely as a thing to which European literature of our epoch offers no equal. Moreover its idea is something of our own, native to us, distinguishing us from the whole European world—it is our national 'new word' or at least its beginning, a word such as one does not hear in Europe, yet which, for all her pride, she greatly needs. In *Anna Karénina* a view of human guilt and criminality is presented. People are taken in abnormal circumstances. Evil exists antecedently. Seized in a vortex of falsehood they commit crimes and inevitably perish. It deals, as we see, with a favourite and very ancient European theme. But after all how is the question solved in Europe? It is there solved always in one of two ways. The first reply is that the law has been given, written, formulated and constituted, during thousands of years. Evil and good are already defined and weighed. He who does not follow it, he who infringes it, pays with liberty, property, or life—pays literally and inhumanly. The other contrary reply is: Since society is abnormally arranged it is impossible to hold individuals responsible for the consequences. Therefore the culprit is not responsible and crime does not yet exist. To have done with crime and human guilt we must end the abnormality of society and its arrangements. The world of Western Europe offers no other replies to the problem of man's guilt and delinquency.

But the Russian author's [Tolstóy's] view clearly considers that no abolition of poverty, no organizing of labour, will save humanity from abnormalities, and consequently from guilt and delinquency. This is expressed with terrible profundity and force in an immense psychological study of the soul of man, and with a realism of artistic presentation unequalled among us. It is made so clear and intelligible as to be obvious, that evil lies deeper in humanity than our Socialist physicians imagine—that no arrangement of society will

eliminate evil; that the human mind remains the same, abnormality and sin proceed from it, and that finally, the laws of the soul of man are still so unknown, so unimagined by science, so undefined, and so mysterious, that there are not as yet, and cannot be, physicians or ultimate judges, but there is only He, who says: 'Vengeance is mine, I will repay!' To Him alone all the secrets of this world and the ultimate fate of man are known.

And that he may not perish in despair through failing to understand his path and destiny, man is here shown the way of escape. It is indicated with genius in the wonderful scene in the earlier part of the novel, where the heroine is at death's door and the culprits and enemies are transformed into higher beings, into brothers forgiving one another everything—into beings who by mutual and complete forgiveness free themselves from falsehood, guilt, and crime, and thereby justify themselves with full consciousness that they have acquired a right to do so. But further in the last part of the novel, in that dark and terrible picture, followed up step by step, of the fall of a human soul, there is so much instruction for a human judge and for him who holds the scales and weights, that in fear and amazement he will certainly exclaim: 'No, Vengeance is not always mine, and I cannot always repay!' And he will not inhumanly hold a miserably fallen offender guilty for having spurned the issue long since indicated by the light or even for having consciously rejected it.

As an example of the injustice Tolstóy has suffered at the hands of bad translators, it may be mentioned that in a German version the epigraph of this novel was rendered as: '*Mein ist die Rache, ich spiele As,*' 'Vengeance is mine, I play the ace.'

Anna Karénina contains passages—the ball, the officers' steeplechase, the mowing, the death of Lévin's brother, and others—which for artistic beauty are unsurpassed and, one is tempted to say, unsurpassable. Towards the end, it contains in admirably concise form much of what Tolstóy has said in his *Confession*, of his quest after the meaning of life, his thoughts of suicide, and how he learnt from a talk with a peasant that man should live for his soul and for God.

His treatment in this novel of the Russian volunteers

who went to fight for Serbia was a bold slap in the face to the Russian jingoes who were having things all their own way at that time; but it is curious to note the precise position that (speaking through the mouth of Lévin) Tolstóy then took up. He did not say that Russia ought not to fight to free the Christian populations of Turkey, he merely said that no individual Russian had any business to volunteer for the Serbian or Bulgarian army or take any action urging the Russian Government towards war.

Of Lévin we are told: 'He, like Mihálylich and the peasants, whose feelings are expressed in the legendary story of the invitation sent to the Varyági by the early inhabitants of Russia, said: "Come and be princes and rule over us. *We gladly promise complete submission. All labour, all humiliations, all sacrifices, we take on ourselves, but we do not judge or decide.*" ' And Lévin goes on to repudiate the idea that the Russian people have 'now renounced this privilege that had been bought at so costly a price'—the privilege, that is, of not taking any part in Government.

The connexion between the roots of Tolstóy's opinions—manifested in these writings of his first fifty years—and his opinions in their ultimate rigid and dogmatic form as expressed during the last three decades, is in general so closely connected; the dogmas of the later period grew so naturally out of the sympathies and experiences of the earlier time, that this point—at which there is a clean line of cleavage (the difference between obeying Government and disobeying it)—is particularly worthy of note. When finishing *Anna Karénina* Tolstóy had not yet reached the conclusion that all Governments employing force are immoral, but his later teachings were dominated by that view.

Apart from the special points I have referred to, the general effect and influence of Tolstóy's fiction is very well summed up by W. D. Howells, who says:

Up to his time fiction had been a part of the pride of life, and had been governed by the criterions of the world which it

amused. But Tolstóy replaced the artistic conscience by the human conscience. Great as my wonder was at the truth in his work, my wonder at the love in it was greater yet. Here, for the first time, I found the most faithful picture of life set in the light of that human conscience which I had falsely taught myself was to be ignored in questions of art as something inadequate and inappropriate. In the august presence of the masterpieces, I had been afraid and ashamed of the highest interests of my nature as something philistine and provincial. But here I stood in the presence of a master who told me not to be ashamed of them, but to judge his work by them, since he had himself wrought in honour of them. I found the tests of conduct which I had used in secret with myself, applied as the rules of universal justice, condemning and acquitting in motive and action, and admitting none of those lawyer's pleas which baffle our own consciousness of right and wrong. Often in Tolstóy's ethics I feel a hardness, almost an arrogance (the word says too much); but in his æsthetics I have never felt this. He has transmuted the atmosphere of a realm hitherto supposed unmoral into the very air of heaven. I found nowhere in his work those base and cruel lies which cheat us into the belief that wrong may sometimes be right through passion, or genius, or heroism. There was everywhere the grave noble face of the truth that had looked me in the eyes all my life, and that I knew I must confront when I came to die. But there was something more than this, infinitely more. There was that love which is before even the truth, without which there is no truth, and which if there is any last day, must appear the Divine justice. . . .

As I have already more than once said, his ethics and æsthetics are inseparably at one; and that is what gives a vital warmth to all his art. It is never that heartless skill which exists for its own sake and is content to dazzle with the brilliancy of its triumphs. It seeks always the truth, in the love to which alone the truth unveils itself. If Tolstóy is the greatest imaginative writer who ever lived, it is because, beyond all others, he has written in the spirit of kindness, and not denied his own personal complicity with his art.

As for the scope of his work, it would not be easy to measure it, for it seems to include all motives and actions, in good and bad, in high and low, and not to leave life untouched at any point as it shows itself in his vast Russian world. Its chief themes are the old themes of art always—they are love, pas-

sion, death, but they are treated with such a sincerity, such a simplicity, that they seem almost new to art, and as effectively his as if they had not been touched before. . . .

He comes nearer unriddling life for us than any other writer. He persuades us that it cannot possibly give us any personal happiness; that there is no room for the selfish joy of any one except as it displaces the joy of some other, but that for unselfish joy there is infinite place and occasion. With the same key he unlocks the mystery of death; and he imagines so strenuously that death is neither more nor less than a transport of self-surrender that he convinces the reason where there can be no proof. The reader will not have forgotten how in those last moments of earth which he has depicted, it is this utter giving up which is made to appear the first moment of heaven. Nothing in his mastery is so wonderful as his power upon us in the scenes of the borderland where his vision seems to pierce the confines of another world. •

None of the above opinions, however, goes more clearly and deeply to the heart of the matter than what Virginia Sackville-West said in the *Nation* at the time of the centenary of his birth. She says:

How organic in growth is *Anna Karenina*! How naturally does one episode branch out of another episode! What a sense of continuity and naturalness are we given! and this in spite of the author, as it were; in spite of the difficulty he has created for himself by running two parallel stories in the same book; and if we say this about *Anna*, what are we to say of that stupendous and complicated *tour de force*, *War and Peace*? We say all this, and remain amazed. Still, the question persists—how is it done?

The whole secret of Tolstóy's supremacy as a novelist lies in one word: intensity. Whatever he felt, saw, undertook, or recorded, he experienced with a maximum of intensity difficult for an English mind (perhaps for any non-Russian mind) to appreciate. It was an intensity which he did not reserve for his fiction only; it was the very essence of the whole man, whether he cut a cockerel out of a railway ticket, denounced the doctrines of the Orthodox Church, made boots, started a school on highly original lines for peasants, scythed a meadow, demolished Shakespeare, played at 'Numidian Cavalry' with the children, or tore himself away from his home and his family. Nature had squandered on Tolstóy enough

material to make half-a-dozen equipped men. To everything he brought the same vigour, and does not appear to have been more interested in literature than in anything else. 'I saw clearly', he said, 'that art is only the ornament and charm of life.' We are left therefore with the impression of a man who, although the greatest of novelists, used fiction as but one outlet amongst many for his energy; but who at the same time must write fiction as though it were as important as life itself. . . . Again, although he is always preoccupied with large and serious ideas, his concentration on reality is such that we never get lost in a fog. We are never disconcerted even by an unfamiliar harmony, as in Chekhov; or confused and battered by the convulsions of the soul as in Dostoevski. Tolstóy, for all his extreme sensitiveness, is never 'difficult'. *War and Peace*, complicated though it is, is not difficult in the sense that *The Possessed* or *The Brothers Karamasov* is difficult. Essentially robust, of all the great Russians, Tolstóy is the least neurotic.

Nevertheless, his method keeps him walking always on a tight rope. Had his intensity failed him for a moment, he must have fallen. It is only by the strength of his own persuasion that we are persuaded. . . . What other novelist would dare to take such liberties with his art? It is Tolstóy's own superb and wanton insolence, justifiable only by the measure of its success; but thanks to that peculiar quality of his genius—his intensity—its success is always beyond question. A novel? Nonsense! Literature? A fig for literature! This is life. And when was life neat, congruous, rounded-off? . . . In the hands of a lesser man, following his method, characters would turn to photographic plates, and incidents to careful records; in Tolstóy's hands, the figures of men and women grow into the round; they pulsate with actual arteries; are furnished with the apparatus of digestion; suffer, joke, and die. It is the life-principle at work. To write like Tolstóy, it is necessary to be Tolstóy all through. It is the element which makes his genius the least baffling, but at the same time the most inimitable.

Tolstóy of the later phase, the last three decades, with which the second volume of this work will deal, differed from the Tolstóy of the first fifty years; but the later Tolstóy grew out of the earlier as the branches of a tree grow from its roots.

The difference lay chiefly in this: that from about the

year 1878 Tolstóy became sure of himself, succeeded in formulating his outlook on life, and proceeded to examine and pass judgement on all the main phases of human thought and activity. His work was sometimes hasty and often harsh; he painted, in black and white, subjects really composed of many shades of colours; but what other man has even attempted so to examine, to portray, and to tell the frank truth about, so many great problems?

No one truly concerned to leave the world better than he found it—be his line of work what it may—can afford to ignore what Tolstóy has said on his subject.

No such combination of intellectual and artistic force during the last century provoked the attention of mankind. No one so stimulated thought, or so successfully challenged established opinions. Tolstóy altered the outlook on life of many men in many lands, and caused some to alter not their ideas merely but the settled habits and customs of their lives. Only those who neither know nor understand him can question his sincerity.

Those who have spoken scornfully of him are people who have not taken the trouble to understand him, or who felt themselves convicted by what he said. On the other hand, the small minority who swallowed his opinions whole, did so under the hypnotic influence of his force, fervour, and genius. To analyse his opinions and disentangle what in them is true from what is false, is a task that has not been adequately performed, but for which the time is ripe, and which, bold as the undertaking may be, it is a duty to attempt.

Tolstóy's marvellous artistic power, his sincerity, and the love that is so strong a feature of his work, have often been dwelt upon; but what really gives him his supreme importance as a literary force is the *union* of these three things, with a quite extraordinary intellectual force.

It is not given to any man to solve all the problems of life, but no one has made so bold and interesting an attempt to do so as Tolstóy, or striven so hard to make his solutions plain to every child of man.

CHRONOLOGY

As in the text, dates are given old style, except those relating to Tolstóy's travels in Western Europe

- 1645 Peter Tolstóy born.
- 1725 Peter Tolstóy made a Count.
- 1727 Peter Tolstóy exiled.
- 1822 Marriage of Tolstóy's parents.
- 1828 28 August o.s. (=9 September n.s.). **Birth of Leo Tolstóy.**
- 1830 7 September. Death of Leo Tolstóy's mother.
- 1837 Death of father.
- 1838 Death of grandmother.
- 1841 Death of aunt, Countess Osten-Sáken. Move to Kazán.
- 1844 **Matriculates at Kazán University.**
- 1847 Leaves University.
- 1849 Passes two examinations at Petersburg University.
- 1851 20 April. **Leaves Yásnaya for Caucasus.**
- „ Goes as volunteer on expedition from Starogládovsk.
- „ November. At Tiflis; writing *Childhood*.
- 1852 13 February. Enters army.
- „ 17-18 February. Nearly killed in action.
- „ September. *Childhood* appears in *Contemporary*.
- 1853 January. Expedition against Shámyl.
- „ 16-17 February. Nearly killed by grenade.
- „ March. *The Raid* appears in *Contemporary*.
- „ 13 June. Nearly captured by Tartars.
- 1854 January. **Receives his commission.**
- „ 2 February. Reaches Yásnaya Polyána.
- „ March. War declared: England and France against Russia.
- „ 12 March. Tolstóy reaches the army in Bucharest.
- „ June (end). Siege of Silistria abandoned.
- „ 14 September. Allies land in Crimea.
- „ October. *Boyhood* appears in *Contemporary*.
- „ November. **Tolstóy reaches Sevastopol.**
- „ 16 November. Stationed at Simferópol.
- 1855 January. *Recollections of a Billiard Marker* published.
- „ 13 April to 27 May. **Serves in Sevastopol, in Fourth Bastion.**

- 1855 May. *Sevastopol in December* published.
- „ 16 August (n.s.). In battle of Tchérnaya.
- „ September. *Sevastopol in May* published.
- „ *The Wood-Felling* published.
- „ 8 September (n.s.). **Malákhov captured by French.**
- „ Sevastopol abandoned by Russians.
- „ November. Tolstóy returns to Petersburg.
- 1856 January. *Sevastopol in August* published.
- „ January (end). Death of Dmítri Tolstóy.
- „ March. Russia concludes peace with England, France, and Turkey.
- „ March. *The Snow Storm* published.
- „ May. *Two Hussars* published.
- „ Summer. Entanglement with V. V. Arsénev.
- „ November. Grand Duke Michael displeased about Soldiers' Song.
- „ 26 November. **Tolstóy leaves the Army.**
- „ December. *Meeting a Moscow Acquaintance in the Detachment* published.
- „ December. *A Landlord's Morning* published.
- 1857 January. *Youth* published.
- „ 10 February (n.s.). Leaves Moscow for Paris.
- „ April. Visits Switzerland.
- „ July. At Lucerne.
- „ August. Returns to Yásnaya Polyána.
- „ September. *Lucerne* published.
- 1858 March. Visits Petersburg. Helps to found Moscow Musical Society.
- „ August. *Albert* published.
- „ 22 December. Nearly killed by a bear.
- 1859 January. *Three Deaths* published.
- „ 4 February. Speaks to Society of Lovers of Russian Literature.
- „ April. *Family Happiness* published.
- „ Winter. Organizes School at Yásnaya.
- 1860 14 July (n.s.). Leaves Petersburg for Berlin.
- „ 2 October (n.s.). **Nicholas Tolstóy died at Hyerès.**
- „ December. In Italy.
- 1861 January. Revisits Paris.
- „ February and March. Visits London.
- „ April. Returns to Russia.
- „ 26 May. **Challenges Turgénev.**
- „ June. Commences work as Arbiter of the Peace.
- 1861-2 Winter. **Occupied with his school.**

- 1862 February. *Yásnaya Polyána* magazine appears.
 „ May. Released from office of Arbiter of the Peace.
 „ May and June. Takes *kumýs* cure in Samára Govern-
 ment.
 „ 6 July. **Police raid at Yásnaya Polyána.**
 „ 16 September. Proposes to Miss S. A. Behrs.
 „ 23 September. **Marries.**
 „ 3 October. Minister of Interior disapproves of *Yásnaya*
Polyána magazine.
- 1863 January. *The Cossacks* published.
 „ February. *Polikúshka* published.
 „ 28 June. Eldest son, Sergius, born.
 „ Autumn. *War and Peace* commenced.
- 1864 26 September. Breaks his arm while hunting.
 „ 4 October. Birth of daughter, Tatiána.
- 1865 February. **First part of *War and Peace* published.**
- 1866 22 May. Second son, Ilyá, born.
 „ 16 July. **Defends soldier at court martial.**
- 1867 Summer. Treated by Zahárin for indigestion.
 „ Publication of *War and Peace* continued.
- 1869 20 May. Third son, Leo, born.
 „ November. *War and Peace* **completed.**
- 1869-70 Studies the drama.
- 1870-1 Winter. Studies Greek.
- 1871 12 February. Birth of daughter, Mary.
 „ June-July. *Kumýs* cure in Samára.
 „ September. Works at *ABC Book*.
- 1872 January. Restarts school.
 A Prisoner in the Caucasus published.
 „ February. *God Sees the Truth* published.
 „ 13 June. Son, Peter, born.
 „ September. Confined to Yásnaya by Investigating
 Magistrate.
 „ 12 November. *ABC Book* published.
- 1873 June. Goes with family to Samára.
 „ 28 July. **Samára Famine: Tolstoy's appeal.**
 „ September. Kramskóy paints his portrait.
 „ 9 November. Death of son, Peter.
- 1874 15 January. Speaks on Learning to Read.
 „ 20 June. Death of Aunt Tatiána.
 „ September. Published article, *On Popular Education*.
- 1875 January-April. **First instalments of *Anna Karénin***
published.
 „ May. New *ABC Book* published.

- 1875 Summer. Horse races at Samára.
- „ 1 November. Baby daughter, Vavára, born and died.
- „ December. Death of Pelagéya I. Yúshkov.
- 1876 January-April and December. Further instalments of *Anna Karénina*.
- „ September. Visit to Samára and Orenburg.
- 1877 January-April. **Final instalment of *Anna Karénina* published.** Rupture with Katkóv.
- „ 6 December. Son, Andrew, born.
- 1878 March. Visits Petropávlov Fortress.
- „ May. **Reconciliation with Turgénev.**
- „ 7 August. Turgénev at Yásnaya Polyána.

CHIEF AUTHORITIES CONSULTED

A numeral is prefixed to each book mentioned. When it has been used in preparing subsequent chapters, instead of repeating its name only the numeral is repeated.

For CHAPTER I

1. P. Biryukov, Lyov Nikolaevich Tolstoy. *Biografiya* Moscow, 1906, vol. i (a storehouse of facts invaluable to every biographer of Tolstoy. The Russian is much better written and more accurate than the English edition).
2. N. N. Gusev, *Zhizn Lva Nikolaevich Tolstogo 1828-1862* Moscow, 1927 (a very detailed and reliable biography largely duplicating that of Biryukov).
3. C. A. Behrs, *Recollections of Count Leo Tolstoy*. London, 1893. The English edition gives the name as C. A. Behrs, but I have elsewhere referred to him as S. A. Behrs, which is correct.
4. Leo Tolstoy, *First Recollections*, a fragment. Tolstoy's collected works. Moscow, 1892.
5. Supplement to *Novy Mir*, Graf Lyov Tolstoy. St. Petersburg, 1903.
6. *Reminiscences of Tolstoy*. Ilya Tolstoy. London, 1914.

For CHAPTER II

- 1, 2, 3, 5, 6.
 7. *Dnevnik molodosti L. N. Tolstogo, 1847-52*. Moscow, 1917.
 8. *Education and Instruction*, and *On the Education of the People* in vol. iv of Tolstoy's collected works. Moscow, 1903.
 9. *Confession*, 'World's Classics' series.
 10. *Family Views of Tolstoy*. London, 1926. (Sergey Tolstoy on Music.)
 11. Zagoskin, in *Istoricheski Vestnik*, January 1894.
 12. Nazaryev, in *Istoricheski Vestnik*, November 1900.
 13. Tolstoy's talk with Pogodin, quoted in Mihaylovski's *Literary Recollections*. Petersburg, 1900.
- Light is also thrown on this period by Tolstoy's *Childhood*, *Boyhood*, and *Youth*, *Recollections of a Billiard Marker*, *Two Hussars*, *A Landlord's Morning*, and *Albert* (which however, are not autobiographies), as well as by stories included in Tolstoy's Readers for School-children *The Old Horse* and *How I Learned to Ride*.

For CHAPTER III

1, 2, 3, 7.

14. U. Bitovt, *Graf L. Tolstoy v literature i iskusstve*. Petersburg, 1903.
15. *Private Diary of Leo Tolstoy*, 1853-57. London 1927.
16. Nekrasov's letters to Tolstoy published in the Literary Supplement to the *Niva*, February 1898.

Much light is also thrown on this period of Tolstoy's life by the following works, which must, however, not be considered autobiographical:

*The Raid.**The Wood-Felling.**Meeting a Moscow Acquaintance.**The Cossacks.**Hadji Murad.**Recollections of a Billiard Marker.**The Snow Storm.*

as well as by stories in Tolstoy's *Readers*:

*Bulka.**Bulka and the Wild Boar.**Milton and Bulka.**Bulka and the Wolf.**What Happened to Bulka in Pyatigorsk.**Bulka's and Milton's End.**A Prisoner in the Caucasus.*

For CHAPTER IV

1, 2, 14, 16.

17. Preface to Ershov's *Recollections of Sevastopol* in Constable's edition of *Sevastopol*, 1905.
18. Kropotkin, *Ideals and Realities in Russian Literature*. London, 1905.
- Tolstoy's *Sevastopol*.

For CHAPTER V

1, 3, 14.

19. Golovacheva-Panaeva, *Russkie Pisateli i Artisty*. Petersburg, 1890.
20. D. V. Grigorovich, *Literaturniya Vospominaniya*, vol. xii. p. 326.
21. G. P. Danilevski, *Istoricheski Vestnik*, March 1886.

22. Fet, *Moi Vospominaniya 1848-1889*. 2 vols. Moscow, 1890.
(Most interesting and valuable aids to an understanding of Tolstóy.)
See also, in Tolstóy's works, *The Decembrists*.

For CHAPTER VI

- 1, 2, 3, 9, 14, 15, 16, 19, 22.
23. Turgenev, *Pervoe sobranie pisem*. Petersburg, 1884.
24. S. Plaksin, *Graf L. Tolstoy sredi detey*.
25. R. Löwenfeld, *Leo N. Tolstoj*.
26. R. Löwenfeld, *Gesprache uber und mit Tolstoj*.
27. *Perepiska L. N. Tolstogo, s Gr. A. A. Tolstoy 1857-1903*.
Petersburg, 1911. And Tolstóy's works, vol. iv.
Moscow, 1903.

For CHAPTER VII

- 1, 2, 14, 15, 25, 27.
Tolstóy's Educational Articles.
A Letter from Tolstóy to A. Maude.

For CHAPTER VIII

- 1, 2, 14, 15.
Tolstóy's Educational Articles.
28. N. V. Uspenski, *Iz Proshlago*.
29. Charles Baudouin, *Tolstoi: The Teacher*. London, 1923.

For CHAPTER IX

- 2, 3, 6, 10, 14, 15, 22, 27.
30. Information concerning the execution of the soldier is given in *Pravo* for 1903.
31. Prince D. D. Obolenski's *Vospominaniya* appeared in *Russki Arhiv*, 1896.
32. See also *Graf L. N. Tolstoy, Vospominaniya S. P. Arbuzova*. Moscow, 1908. (Arbuzov was in Tolstóy's service twenty-two years. He gives his master an excellent character; and though inaccurate, his naïve chatter is very readable and throws light on Tolstóy.)
33. P. I. Biryukov. *L. N. Tolstóy Biografiya*, vol. ii. Berlin, 1921.

For much information in this chapter as well as elsewhere I am indebted to Tolstóy himself, to the Countess S. A. Tolstóy, to his sister, to Tatiana Lvovna, and particularly to Mary Lvovna, Princess Obolenski, now deceased.

For CHAPTER X

1, 2, 3, 10, 14, 15, 27, 33.

34. *L. N. Tolstogo perepiska s N. N. Strakhovym*, 1870-1894. Petersburg, 1914.

Information relating to this period is also contained in a number of magazines and newspaper articles, of which the following are the most important.

On the Education dispute see:

Moskov. Eparhial. Ved., October 1874.

Russkiya Vedomosti, 1894, No. 31.

N. K. Mihaylovski's *Zapiski Profana*, and

E. Schuyler in *Russkaya Starina*, October 1870, and in *Scribner's Magazine*, May and June 1889.

About *War and Peace* see:

V. Solovyev in *Niva*, No. 43; and

Dragomirov in *Orouzh, Sbornik.*, 1862, No. 4.

About Samara Famine, &c., see:

A. S. Prugavin in *Obrazovaniye*, November 1902.

On Turgenev's visit to Yasnaya see:

Tobolskiya Gubern. Vedomosti, 1893, No. 26.

The *Russkoye Obozreniye*, 1896, contains a letter from Tolstóy to Fet.

The *Vestnik Evropa*, 1896, contains M. Zaharina's *Vospominaniya gr. A. A. Tolstaya*.

For CHAPTER XI

Tolstóy's *Confession*.

For CHAPTER XII

The literature that has grown up both in Russia and elsewhere round Tolstóy's earlier writings is so voluminous that I can merely indicate a few of the best-known works.

In English we have:

Matthew Arnold's essay, *Count Leo Tolstoi* in *Essays in Criticism*, Second Series, Macmillan & Co., London. (Arnold relied on a French translation—hence his misspelling of Tolstóy's name.)

W. D. Howells has several very readable and excellent essays on Tolstóy.

P. Kropotkin's *Ideas and Realities in Russian Literature* gives a very good idea of Tolstóy's general influence and relation to Russian life and literature generally.

E. M. Forster's *Aspects of the Novel* contains a fine appreciation of *War and Peace*.

In Russian:

Mihaylovski's articles in his collected works are interesting.

N. Strahov's *Kriticheskiya Statyi o Turgeneve i Tolstom*. Petersburg, 1895, is excellent.

V. Zelinsky's *Russkaya Kriticheskaya Literatura o proizvedeniyakh L. N. Tolstovo* (7 vols.) reprints a large collection of Russian criticisms on Tolstoy's works.

D. S. Merezhkovski's *Zhizn i tvortchestvo L. N. Tolstovo i Dostoevskovo* contains acute literary criticism. But for all that relates to Tolstoy as a man it is worse than useless. Merezhkovski did not know Tolstoy personally when he wrote about him. He relied on the works of Behrs and Anna Seuron, and even that scrappy information he used unfairly. His whole characterization of Tolstoy is spiteful, and to those who knew the man attacked it is merely ridiculous.

Percy Lubbock, *The Craft of Fiction*, deals admirably with Tolstoy's novels.

V. Sackville-West, an article on 'Tolstoy' in *The Nation* of 8 September 1928.

APPENDIX I

TOLSTÓY'S NAME

A STRANGE state of things exists with reference to Tolstóy's family name. He always spelt it with a y, even when he wrote in French, though in that language *oy* does not, as it does in English, convey the right pronunciation of the final accentuated syllable. His practice accords with the carefully considered system of transliteration from Russian into English promulgated by the British Academy, whose Report on the subject was unanimously agreed to by such eminent authorities as Sir F. Pollock, Sir Paul Vinogradoff, Dr. Hagberg Wright, Dr. Seton-Watson, Mr. Minns, and Mr. Hinks. There would therefore seem to be no reasonable possibility of disagreement on the matter, and there would, I think, be no more doubt about the spelling of Tolstóy's name than there is about that of Victor Hugo or Charles Dickens, were it not that a factitious and commercial opposition exists to it.

The earliest translations of Tolstóy's works in England and America were made from French versions: the French at first spelt the name Tolstoï. Later on French printers simplified this into Tolstoi, which neither in French nor in English corresponds to the right pronunciation. Certain English and American publishers who had editions in which either of these spellings was employed were naturally not pleased when better translations, made direct from the Russian by people who knew how Tolstóy spelt his name, began to appear, and Mr. N. H. Dole, who translated an edition for Messrs. Crowell & Co. of New York (published in England by The Walter Scott Publishing Co.), wrote on several occasions in defence of the discredited spelling.

The following is part of a letter I addressed to a Boston paper dealing with the matter, in reply to an article in which Mr. Dole had expressed his views.

Mr. N. H. Dole in reviewing *Tolstóy on Art* somewhat humorously remarks that 'Mr. Maude defends his spelling of Tolstóy's name (with a final y)'. The humour lies in speaking of Tolstóy's spelling of his own name as being *my* way and needing defence. The explanation of N. H. D.'s attitude is that he is connected with an edition of Tolstóy's works in which that writer's name is continually misspelt, and that now that this error has been pointed out he finds himself called on to defend a hopeless case.

The shifts to which he is driven are curious. He first pleads that 'Men do not always select the best transliteration of their own names . . . or even pronounce them correctly'. He does not actually say that Tolstóy did not know how to pronounce his own name, but he would have us believe that though Tolstóy spoke English and corresponded in our language, he did not know how to spell his name in English. Faced by the fact that the British Academy, after appointing a Committee of acknowledged experts to draw up a scheme of transliteration from Russian, recommended one which confirms Tolstóy's practice—all N. H. D. has to say is that 'there are two or three difficulties in their generally excellent list'. The case, therefore, is that we have a great writer's spelling of his own name confirmed by a most authoritative body of experts, but that N. H. D. does not like their decision.

He has, however, other arguments in defence of his spelling. He says it is the accepted mode in France. But as in general the French system of transliteration is misleading for English readers, it has properly been rejected in favour of one that indicates to us the pronunciation better. For instance, when the French write Mácha we write Másha, and so on. Next comes an argument which shows either that N. H. D. is ignorant of Russian pronunciation, or that he is ready to say anything for the sake of confusing the issue. He actually defends the spelling Tolstoï, with a view to 'making it a trisyllable and not a disyllable as the *y* does, and indicating a slightly more accurate pronunciation'. But the name Tolstóy, in Russian as in English, is a disyllable. If our common word 'toy' does not precisely indicate the Russian pronunciation, that is only because the Russian *o* has a somewhat different sound to our *o* in English. The suggestion that by substituting *i* for *y* readers will be helped to a better pronunciation of the name is grotesquely absurd. Then follows the erroneous statement that the *y* 'is properly pre-empted for the final syllable of adjective names like Volkonsky,

differentiated from Polish names of the same sort which end in *i*, like Pomatowski'. This, again, is wrong; *ski* is a Polish termination, and when Polish names make their way into Russian there is no good reason for converting the *i* into *y*. (*Vide*, once again, the British Academy's transliteration scheme.) Moreover, the question before us is not how to transliterate the termination *ski* but the termination *oy*. N. H. D. is also in error when he intimates that one member of the Tolstóy family, Count L. L. Tolstóy, spells his name with *ï* in English. This is not so, for I have letters from him, and he signed his name with a *y*. N. H. D. has no doubt got hold of the English translation of a book by L. L. Tolstóy published in French. The English translator, translating from the French, has blunderingly retained the French *ï*. It was precisely as a result of translating from the French and not from the Russian that the misspelling of Tolstóy's name originated, and I suspect that it was in that way that N. H. D.'s versions of Tolstóy went astray in the first instance.

I have covered the whole of his arguments except the extraordinary one that as Shakespeare spelt his name in various ways and we therefore have a choice of spellings, we ought also to have a choice of ways of spelling Tolstóy's name, despite the fact that he always spelt it consistently. When a man is reduced to such an argument, he evidently knows that his cause is bad.

APPENDIX II

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS OF TOLSTÓY

AMONG us a foreign author's reputation depends so largely on the quality of the translation by which he is judged, that it would not be fair to Tolstóy's memory or to readers interested in his works, were I to shirk responsibility by not discriminating between the various editions offered to the public, some of which do him very grave injustice.

Despite the proverb that 'dog does not eat dog', I will therefore (leaving our own edition aside) say something about the four other current editions of Tolstóy's greatest novel—*War and Peace*. To deal with all his other works would take too long. The task is facilitated by my being able to quote remarks made by Mr. J. H. Penson, whose instances I have verified and found correct.

The earliest, I think, and certainly the worst version of *War and Peace* is that issued in the justly popular 'Everyman' series. Mr. Penson, in an article in *The Author*, says:

Tolstóy . . . by refusing copyright and inviting any one and every one to translate and publish his works, brought down upon the public a confused host of editions and translations, most of them hasty and ill-revised. In consequence his works have been, and still are, more obscure to English readers by misrepresentation than those of any other writer of first rank.

We have only to take the popular and handy edition of *War and Peace* in the 'Everyman' series for a striking example of this. It is a reproduction of a version from the French by Vizetelly. The book as translated is no longer Tolstóy. It is a paraphrase rather than a translation. Whole sentences are omitted—blocks of sentences sometimes—words and phrases drop out, or are altered, in every paragraph. Even worse, the style has been lost completely. The following passage must suffice as an example. Describing Anatole Kurágin's intrigue with the pretty Frenchwoman, Bourienne, Tolstóy wrote:

'They both understood that they had a great deal to say

to one another in private, and therefore since the morning had been seeking an opportunity of meeting each other alone. When the princess went at the usual hour to her father, Mlle Bourienne and Anatole met in the conservatory.'

The translator has altered this to:

'They both felt that they had much to say to each other; they met by the merest accident—in the conservatory next morning, just as Maria, more dead than alive, was making her way as usual to her father's room.'

On the second page Tolstóy tells us that Anna Pávlovna made it her official vocation to be enthusiastic and that, not to disappoint her visitors, she sometimes became enthusiastic even when she did not feel like it. Giving an instance of this, he says that: 'In the midst of a conversation on political matters, Anna Pávlovna burst out: "Oh, don't speak to me of Austria!"' This Vizetelly translates: 'The tone of this political dialogue had thoroughly provoked Anna Pávlovna'—though there is no word in Tolstóy about Anna Pávlovna being 'provoked'.

Liberties such as this are taken on almost every page of the book.

Among translations, something analogous prevails to the 'Gresham's law' economists speak of. That law explains why inferior money, if it be legal tender, drives good money out of circulation. People prefer to pay their debts in the money of least value. The better money has higher exchange value abroad and the better coins are more valuable for melting down. So the inferior money remains in circulation while the better money disappears.

What happens with translations of famous novels by great writers is, that many a publisher would like to include the names of such books and such authors in his list if he could procure them for next to nothing, and occasionally the chance to do so occurs. For instance, it happened that Vizetelly, who was in the habit of translating and publishing works from the French, thought he could make a saleable book by paraphrasing a French version of *War and Peace*. He produced something which

does an injustice to Tolstóy, and does not give a purchaser who asks for *War and Peace* what he is entitled to expect. In course of time Vizetelly went bankrupt—the stereoplates of his book were for sale at a cheap price ‘with translation rights’. The opportunity to obtain a version of such a famous novel at such a price outweighed the fact that the author’s name was misspelt, that the names in the book generally were spelt in a French way perplexing to English readers, and that Vizetelly’s name as translator was no recommendation. What could be simpler than to suppress his name and leave the readers in the dark as to whom the translation was by? Issued at a cheap price in a popular series it escaped exposure because the volumes of that series usually consist of reprints and are rarely reviewed, besides which reviewers seldom care to deal in detail with the merits of translations from the Russian.

What is serious about this matter is that as long as a version such as Vizetelly’s in the ‘Everyman’ library is in circulation, and booksellers stock it because it is in a popular series, it is certain that many readers will unwittingly accept it and will consequently quite misjudge Tolstóy’s quality as a writer. The Gresham law operates: a version, because it is bad is offered cheaply, and because it is cheap finds its way into a popular series. Once there, despite its badness, it is difficult to oust it from circulation.

There is, however, this difference between the Gresham law in economics and the analogous law of translations. If a coin serves to meet an obligation, we cannot expect people to consider its quality, but though the sale of bad translations is a legal operation and may sometimes be a profitable one, those who care for the author’s reputation may remonstrate when offered versions that do him injustice, and such remonstrances may in course of time lead to its publication being discontinued.

The next version to discuss is Mr. N. H. Dole’s, published by Crowell & Co. in America and till recently by Walter Scott in England. Mr. Dole made an unpromising

start as a translator from the Russian, for in the Preface to his version of Chernishévski's novel *What To Do?* (which Mr. Dole rechristened *A Vital Question*) one finds the remark that: 'In one single scene Kirsanov's character has been slightly mended better to suit the American ideal of man.' Hardly the way to treat a Russian classic.

Mr. Penson, in the article quoted above, speaking of the 'Everyman' version, continues:

In no other version familiar to English readers has the evil of paraphrasing been carried to such an extent, but there are others which are not much more accurate, and their inaccuracy leads them sometimes into the most astonishing blunders. The well-known Crowell-Walter Scott edition—the translator of which is Mr. N. H. Dole—renders 'firmly fixed his eyes straight on his face' by 'gave him a direct and heavy blow between the eyes' [Vol. i of *War and Peace*, p. 185]—this of a young officer towards his superior in time of war! Mr. Dole makes soldiers march three hundred versts (about two hundred miles) without having 'once closed their eyes' [Vol. i of *War and Peace*, p. 155], and quite gratuitously introduces a 'cathedral' on the battle of Borodínó [Vol. iv of *War and Peace*, p. 292]. This is the edition most usually supplied at our public libraries!

Hardly a page in Mr. Dole's translation is free from blunders and sometimes there are half a dozen to a dozen on a single page, but poor as the translation is—with names badly transliterated, Russian words left untranslated, unnecessary foot-notes, and blunders in every chapter,—it is still fairly readable and people have enjoyed the novel in this version. Professor Gilbert Murray well remarks: 'The wonder to me has always been how Tolstóy contrives to make such a tremendous and characteristic impression through such an opaque and distorting medium as the average Anglo-American translation!'

Mr. Dole's version of *War and Peace* was for some time sold with the words 'authorized version' on the title-page, but that claim is no longer made for it, and Messrs. Crowell & Co. have admitted to the Secretary of the Tolstóy Society that they cannot substantiate it. In the

announcements of their new edition 'indorsements' of Mr. Dole's work are quoted from Tatiana Tolstóy, who is now Mme. T. Sukhotin-Tolstóy. They are taken from letters written forty or forty-five years ago, and the lady in question now writes about them: 'I remember corresponding with Mr. Dole, and I am quite sure I never could have given him any authorization either in my father's name (the only authorization that would have any value) or in my own. The quotations from my letters are probably authentic, but Mr. Dole's were the first translations into English and of course we were pleased they were made even if they were not quite good. There is no doubt that the translations since made by Mr. and Mrs. Maude are much superior.

'None of us had ever taken the trouble to compare Mr. Dole's translations with the text, or even to read any of them through. Otherwise of course we should have noticed such blunders as when, in *War and Peace* Nicholas Rostov gives Denisov "a direct and heavy blow between the eyes", and the "cathedral" on the battlefield of Borodino.

'If you wish to publish this letter you are at liberty to do so.'

Since writing the above an announcement has reached me of a new pocket edition of 'Tolstoi's complete works', issued by Messrs. Crowell & Co. and translated by half a dozen different people—though half a dozen different people writing in half a dozen different styles cannot provide a satisfactory version of such a writer as Tolstóy. From the list of books given it is obvious also that the edition is far from being 'complete'. Among the list of translators I am surprised to find my own name. I did a very little work for Messrs. Crowell nearly thirty years ago, and am unable to prevent their using certain other translations of mine that are not copyright in America, but I had requested them not to make such use of my name. *War and Peace* and *Anna Karenina* appear still to be given in Mr. Dole's versions. Whether he has corrected the particular blunders pointed out by Mr. Penson I do

not know, but there is no indication that the versions have been re-written, and nothing short of that would free them from the mass of errors to be met with from one end of the works to the other.

Next we have the edition edited, and I suppose translated, by Professor Leo Wiener. He at least spells Tolstóy's name and the other names properly. He also, despite a number of curious slips, understands the Russian he is translating, but the pity is that when he made this version he had no literary command of our language. When, for instance, he says, in one passage, that 'In the village people rise with the fires', [Vol. iv of the edition, p. 228] readers may well be puzzled as to what he means. Sometimes he is unintentionally funny, as when he makes Tolstóy say of Napoleon: 'He drew his gold snuff-box out of his pocket, and with his nose took a pinch from it' [Vol. vii (Part IX of *War and Peace*), p. 34]. Mr. Penson, in his article, remarks that: 'Mr. Wiener introduces "riflemen" at Borodino (forty years before rifles came into use) [Vol. vii, p. 309], and his version painfully suggests that the language in which the book was written was an intractable instrument to him who wrote it.'

Mr. Wiener would have us believe that Prince Andrew 'heard from his father an elaborate account of Natásha's rape' [Vol. vi, p. 529], though there is no question of a rape in Tolstóy's novel.

Mrs. Constance Garnett's work belongs to a different and a much superior category. It is not easy to deal with her work, for while my task is primarily to secure justice for Tolstóy's work, I do not wish to disparage Mrs. Garnett's achievement. I selected her version for praise in the first edition of my *Life of Tolstóy*, but after that book was published I was reproached by more than one Russian translator of repute, who said that I ought to know, and not to conceal, the fact that she sometimes misrepresents the authors she translates. Constantine Nabokoff wrote to me on the subject, nor was he the only expert who said the same thing. This led me to examine Mrs. Garnett's

work more carefully, and it seems to me that the question really is how high a standard one should set. If we take as the standard Jowett's Plato (not that I am competent to judge it), Mrs. Garnett fails to pass muster. But apart from his unique talent, Jowett was a University professor with an endowment, and able to make almost a life-work of that translation. He was exceptionally placed and could obtain every kind of co-operation and assistance he needed. A translator working for publishers and having to turn out one book quickly after another—especially a translator such as Mrs. Garnett who deals with several Russian novelists one after another, each of whom had a style of his own and his own outlook on life—must not be judged by so strict a standard. If we compare her work with that of the other translators mentioned she deserves very high praise. Her English is incomparably better than Mr. Wiener's, and she does not make the glaring mistakes Mr. Dole perpetrates: the errors in her versions are exceptional rather than typical of the general character of her work. Still she falls short of doing Tolstóy full justice. In the *New Statesman* a correspondent inquired whether the following passages in her version (published by Heinemann) were correct:

p. 121. 'A present from his father, brought back from his campaign under Otchakov.' To this Mr. Penson replied: 'Ochakov was the great Turkish fortress captured by the Russians under Suvorov in 1788. . . . There is no word corresponding to "campaign".' In fact Ochakov was a town and not a general.

p. 334. '[Napoleon] saw clearly that the centre was too much weakened to be able to attack him successfully.' This Mr. Penson says is important in view of the undoubted historical value of *War and Peace*. The passage in Mrs. Garnett's version clearly runs counter to the Russian text: 'Napoleon was, as ever, looking for an opportunity to take the offensive. He saw that his enemies' centre was so weakened that he would be able to break it.'

Thirdly, p. 257. 'I . . . went skating with her.' Of this Mr. Penson says: 'There is nothing in the Russian version to suggest skating. The word is the one ordinarily used for going out for a drive.'

He adds another example, from the passage where Prince Andrew dreams of the battle of Krems, and once again feels his heart beating 'as he rides forward beside Schmidt'. This is very different from 'galloping in front of the lines with Schmidt' as Mrs. Garnett has it.

Here are a few more instances: many such could be cited though not anything like so many as in the Vizetelly or Dole versions.

p. 34. 'Anatol . . . standing . . . in nothing but a thin shirt, open over his chest.' This is a case of a literal translation quite misrepresenting the author's meaning. Anatol simply had his coat off and was in his shirt sleeves.

p. 113. 'Prince Andréy and his sister kissed each other's hands.' This gives a wrong impression of the relations between Andrew and his sister. They merely kissed each other, hand in hand. The same mistake is repeated on p. 129.

p. 290. 'Berg and Boris . . . were playing draughts... "I am going to try", answered Berg, touching the pieces and taking his hand away again.' They were playing chess, and Berg touched a pawn and then removed his hand.

p. 295. (Of Nicholas Rostóv) 'He could not tell them simply that they had all been charging full gallop, that he had fallen off his horse, sprained his arm, and run with all his might away from the French into the copse.' This should read: 'He could not tell them simply that every one went at a trot, and that he tumbled off his horse and sprained his arm, and then ran as hard as he could from a Frenchman into the wood.'

p. 312. (Of the Emperor Alexander) 'Bending on one side with a graceful gesture, holding a gold field-glass to his eyes, he was looking at a soldier, lying on his face with a blood-stained and uncovered

head.' This should read: 'Bending to one side, he gracefully held a gold lorgnette to his eyes, and looked at a soldier who lay prone without his casque and with blood on his head.'

But, I shall be asked, what of the versions by your wife and yourself? Do you make no mistakes?

I evidently am not the right person to reply to that, and can only say that any one who points out errors I can correct, will be rendering me a great service. If our renderings deserve the praise they have received, it is mainly due to favourable circumstances. My wife was born in Moscow and lived there for the first forty years of her life; I lived there for more than twenty-three years. We knew Tolstóy intimately. He visited us and I repeatedly stayed at Yásnaya Polyána, where as well as in Moscow I discussed his works with him when some of them were first appearing. He co-operated actively in the preparation of more than one of our versions. Moreover we have specialized for years almost exclusively on his works and our knowledge of his essays and didactic writings has helped us to understand his novels and vice versa. An acquaintance with his family affairs has also been useful. For instance, where the relations between Sónya and Nicholas Rostóv (closely modelled on those of 'Auntie' Tatiána and his own father) are in question, Mrs. Garnett renders it: (p. 368) "Why should he not love her now, even if he did not marry her" mused Rostóv.' This is an impossible rendering, not merely because it conflicts with the Russian text but also because, to Tolstóy, the chivalrous and honourable attitude of Nicholas towards Sónya was a priceless family tradition.

Finally, my wife and I have always been rather keen to point out one another's blunders. It took us years to learn to co-operate smoothly in our translations, and had either of us worked alone the quality of our version would have suffered.

That I may not have to return to the subject of translations in my second volume, let me here mention two

very flagrant instances of disregard of Tolstóy's expressed wishes in the matter.

The first case is that of *What is Art?* After collaborating in the preparation of my version, he wrote a Preface to it in which he said of the book: 'More than one edition has already been issued in Russia, but in each case it has been so mutilated by the Censor that I request all who are interested in my views on art to judge them only by the work in its present shape.' Despite this specific request, Professor Wiener produced a version of his own and, as though to show that Tolstóy had good reason for his warning, he proceeded (p. 343 of his 1904 Collected Edition of Tolstóy's works) to turn: 'True science should indicate the various methods of applying this consciousness to life,' into: 'True art must indicate the different manners of applying this consciousness to life'—thereby confusing Tolstóy's argument; and in the very next sentence he did the same again. Tolstóy said: 'The task of art is enormous. Through the influence of real art, aided by science guided by religion, that peaceful co-operation of man which is now maintained by external means—by our law-courts, police, charitable institutions, factory inspection, and so forth—should be obtained by man's free and joyous activity. Art should cause violence to be set aside.'

This the Professor renders by: 'The problem of art is enormous: true art, which by means of science is guided by religion, ought to have this effect, that the peaceable cohabitation of men—' &c.

A notable case of a different kind has recently occurred in relation to *Resurrection*. Tolstóy having expressly authorized my wife's translation of *Resurrection* no other version appeared in England till 1927, when, a film of the novel having been made at Hollywood, the Readers' Library brought out an anonymous sixpenny translation. It announced it as 'Tolstóy's masterpiece, which published now in its present popular form, should be read by all'. The edition gave no indication of the fact that the work was abbreviated, though it was in fact cut down from about

198,000 words to some 113,000. In a letter, published in *The Author*, the question was asked whether, 'if it is wrong to sell shortweight of butter it can be right to sell shortweight of a literary masterpiece'. The objection is not to the sale of admitted abbreviations, but to selling the equivalent of half-pound packets of tea as pound packets. Besides that, there is the question of disregarding Tolstóy's authorization and offering a defective and anonymous version as one which 'should be read by all'.

It remains to refer to a curious point, the blame for which falls partly on a misprint in the Russian text correction of which is long overdue. The matter is of importance if justice is to be done to Tolstóy's careful description of Napoleon's invasion of Russia. In *War and Peace*, Chap. VI of Book IX, in conversation with Balashëv Napoleon refers to the fact that the Vistula is far to the west of the Niemen. In Chap. II of that same Book an account is given of Napoleon crossing the Niemen, turning sharply to the left, and galloping in the direction of Kovno, stopping when he reached the river Víliya, the swimming of which by his Polish Uhlans is described. The misprint in the Russian text consists in the substitution of 'Visla' (the Vistula—a river some 200 miles to the west) for 'Víliya', the river in question at which the incident Tolstóy described actually occurred. To detect and correct this obvious blunder all that was necessary was to consult a good atlas or a detailed history of the campaign; yet not one of the four versions above referred to avoided the pitfall. Mr. Dole and Professor Wiener let Napoleon watch his cavalry swim a river that was two hundred miles to his rear and which the troops could not have swum. The 'Everyman Library' edition avoids such a palpable absurdity by calling the river 'the larger Niemen', though no such river exists in that neighbourhood. Evidently Vizetelly saw there was a blunder somewhere but did not take the trouble to correct it. Mrs. Garnett makes Napoleon send his troops a second time across the 'Niemen', and does this without comment, though it conflicts with the

course of the narrative and with the history of the campaign.

Such treatment of so great an historical work by four different translators indicates that the formation of a Tolstóy Society to support the production of a reliable edition of Tolstóy's works, was needed.

Despite the Gresham law to which I have alluded, Mr. Milford has proceeded with the production of a Centenary Edition which will afford librarians the first opportunity they have ever had of obtaining in one language a collected edition of Tolstóy's works which will be authorized and reliable. Twenty years after a writer's death his reputation is generally in the trough of the inevitable posthumous reaction—but Tolstóy's works are still read, and are likely to be read long after the best sellers of to-day have been relegated to back shelves.

APPENDIX III

THE CENTENARY EDITION OF TOLSTÓY'S WORKS

IN 1922, Mr. Bernard Shaw addressed the following letter to the Press. It received the endorsement of the numerous distinguished people, here and in America, whose signatures are appended.

10 ADELPHI TERRACE,
W.C.2.

28 *February* 1922.

SIR,

We desire to call public attention, especially in circles interested in literature and in general cultural questions, to the lack of a complete edition of the works of Leo Tolstóy in the English language. Unfortunately the means adopted by Tolstóy to secure the widest possible circulation for his books had just the opposite effect. He invited all publishers in all countries to take the fullest advantage of the absence of international copyright between Russia and other countries by publishing his writings in such translations as they could procure without any reference to his moral or legal rights. In the case of any less famous author this step would have prevented his works being translated at all, as it is practically impossible to engage modern capital in publishing, or any other enterprise, without property rights. In Tolstóy's case it led to the appearance of a great number of translations, including some very incompetent ones, of a few of his books which were considered specially interesting as stories, or were capable of being turned to account for propaganda. These few books have consequently become more or less well known; but the profits of their publication have been so divided that they have in no instance been able to carry a complete edition on their backs. Accordingly, no complete edition has yet

appeared; and the one projected for the Tolstóy Centenary of 1928 by the Oxford University Press, translated by Aylmer Maude, whose competence and acceptance by Tolstóy himself are unquestionable, may prove commercially impossible unless the public, by spontaneously giving it the privileges of a copyright edition, both by subscribing for complete sets and specifying this edition in their purchases of separate volumes, makes up for the absence of legal rights and for the miscarriage of Tolstóy's public-spirited intention in the matter.

The Oxford Press translation will be complete and unique, and certain to remain so, as it is not now possible for any new English writer to bring to a translation of Tolstóy's works the personal knowledge of the author, and the peculiar experience of Russian life and of the Tolstóyan social experiments that followed the first publication of his writings, enjoyed by Mr. Aylmer Maude and his wife and collaborator, who is a native of Russia. We feel that its failure to appear would be a grave loss to our national literary equipment; and we earnestly hope that the opportunity of completing the nineteenth-century bookshelf both of our public and private libraries by a complete edition of his works in English will not be missed.

Yours truly,

G. BERNARD SHAW.

LIST OF SIGNATORIES TO SHAW'S LETTER

Henry Ainley (Fedya of *Reparation*).

Meggie Albanesi (Alexandra of *Reparation*).

The Rev. Cyril Alington, D.D., Head Master of Eton.

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Lena Ashwell (Katusha of *Resurrection*).

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H. L. Mencken.

Harriet Monroe.

Eugene O'Neill.

William Lyon Phelps.

Chas. Ed. Russell.

Booth Tarkington.

Lucy E. Textor.

The Hon. Henry Vandyck.

Owen Wister.

Beside those who have signed Shaw's letter, Thomas Hardy wrote:

'Although I have no first-hand knowledge of the details mentioned in Mr. Bernard Shaw's letter on translations of Tolstóy, I agree with the opinion that a good rendering of his works into English—so far as that is possible—should be made practicable by the concentration of effort on one production; and I believe that Mr. Aylmer Maude's competence for the task is special and trustworthy.'

Professor Gilbert Murray wrote:

'I am in the most cordial agreement with Shaw's letter and will most gladly sign it. It is a great public service that you and the Oxford Press between you are undertaking. The wonder to me has always been how Tolstóy contrived to make such a tremendous and characteristic impression through such an opaque and distorting medium as the average Anglo-American translation.'

Tolstóy wrote:

December 1898. 'I have received your letter, dear friend Maude, and am very glad that you are again in England and wish to work at translating my writings. I do not desire a better translator, both on account of your knowledge of the two languages and of your strictness with yourself in everything.'

January 1899. 'I am very glad that your dear wife is doing the translation of *Resurrection*.'

May 1900. 'Your translations are very good because you have an admirable mastery of both the languages, and besides that, to my great pleasure, you love the thoughts you transmit.'

September 1900. 'To lose such translators as you and your wife would be very, very unpleasant. Better translators, both in your knowledge of both languages and in your penetration into the very meaning of the matter translated, could not be invented.'

February 1901. 'I think that your and your wife's splendid translation of what has previously been published and badly translated should find a publisher.'

18 January 1910. 'I am better now and add a line to say a few words, namely that the edition of your translations of my writings can only give me pleasure, because your translations are very good and I do not desire better ones. . . . My approval of your translations in my letters you can, of course, publish.'

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